

Mountain Path Library



Ramana Jyothi

A SOUVENIR in aid of SRI RAMANA AUDITORIUM

1379

18



'THE MOUNTAIN PATH'
LIBRARY.
Book No. 1379
Date



'THE MOUNTAIN PATH' LIBRARY.
Book No. 1M-57
Date 6/7/78

we
humbly
lay
this
Souvenir,
**RAMANA
JYOTHI**
at
the
**Lotus
Feet**
of
Bhagavan
Sri
Ramana
Maharshi

1379

Ramana Jyothi

SOUVENIR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SRI D. S. SASTRI

(Retd. Chief Agent, Central Bank of India, Madras Group)

SRI K. K. NAMBIAR

(Chief Engineer, Cement Service Bureau, Madras)

DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMY

(Medical Practitioner, Madras)

SRI FRAMJI DORABJI

(Partner, Wellington Talkies, Madras)

PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

(Chief Editor, 'Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi', New Delhi)

SRI POPATLAL B. KOTAK

(Managing Director, M/s. Kotak & Co., Bombay)

SRI J. SRINIVASAN

(Chartered Accountant, Bangalore)

SRI V. GANESAN

(Managing Editor, THE MOUNTAIN PATH, Sri Ramanasramam)

INTRODUCTION

September 1, is an auspicious day for all Ramana-devotees! It was on that day in 1896 that the 16-year young Venkataramanan, stepped into Arunachala. On reaching the town, Tiruvannamalai, Venkataramanan went direct to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Arunachaleswara Temple and reported to Lord Arunachala: "Father, I have come obeying your call". With that report his 'burden' was over - the Son had merged into the Father and Arunachala-Ramana was born! Devotees began to hail him as BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI, by which name and title the world now knows Him. People of all stations and from all walks of life came to have the Maharshi's **darshan**. The Light spread and was recognised, despite the obstacles of time and space.

* * * * *

Sri Maharshi's teaching was direct and simple. It appealed to all alike, orthodox or heterodox, Hindu or non-Hindu. His method of Self-Enquiry took the seeker direct to the depths of *apperception* and gave him the joyous experience of identity with the Indweller, the Self.

* * * * *

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan know of the consecration of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace - **Sri Ramaneswara Mahalinga** which was done on completion of the Samadhi Mantap, in 1967, when an appropriate Souvenir - RAMANA PICTORIAL SOUVENIR - was brought out to mark the occasion. It was part of the construction plan to bring to fruition in due course **Sri Ramana Auditorium** (Meditation Hall) now taking shape in front of Sri Maharshi's Samadhi Shrine.

* * * * *

By His Grace and the generous help of His devotees, who had long felt the need for a meditation hall and auditorium in front of His Shrine, we were enabled to commence this work on an auspicious day, September 1, 1969, (synchronizing with the date and month of 1896) with the aim of completing the same before the 20th Mahanirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan in May, 1970. In furtherance of this event the present Souvenir is issued. In bringing out the same, our added aim has been to make available to devotees yet another collection of Sri Bhagavan's photographs with select articles, specially contributed, on 'Sri Ramana', whose 'Light' ever shines as the Beacon on top of Arunachala. We have thus the RAMANA JYOTHI!

* * * * *

The task of bringing out the Souvenir was entrusted to Sri V. Ganesan, Managing Editor, *THE MOUNTAIN PATH*. To assist him in the task a Souvenir Committee was formed, to whose devoted labours we owe the success of this project and to whom we express our deepest thanks. To the authors of the articles, we join our readers in offering sincere thanks. Special mention should be made of the services of Sri D. S. Sastri (Madras), Sri Popatlal B. Kotak and Sri P. V. Somasundaram (Bombay) on the business side and of Prof. K. Swaminathan (Delhi) on the editorial side. Prof. Swaminathan also deserves our gratitude for providing English translations of Tamil poems and articles. We are grateful to Sri A. R. Natarajan (New Delhi) for his invaluable advice, guidance and help throughout the project!

Once more we must express our gratitude to a devotee who prefers to remain anonymous while offering to meet the cost of printing and producing the Souvenir and to a pious lady-devotee from Spain, whose substantial monetary contribution, in fact, encouraged us to take up the construction of the Auditorium now.

Our gratitude is also due to Sri K. Subbarayan, the Architect-Engineer and to Sri C. G. Chinnappa Naidu, the Engineering Contractor, both of Bangalore, but for whose co-operation and assurances, the construction work would not have been commenced on 1-9-1969.

We offer our grateful thanks to all the advertisers and industrialists who have helped generously to make this Souvenir a success.

To Sri Vishnupant K. Kadav, Proprietor of **M/s. Shankar & Co.,** Bombay, our thanks are due once again for placing at our disposal, free of cost, all the blocks appearing in this Souvenir. We also thank **M/s. Jupiter Press Private Ltd., Madras,** and their staff for their invaluable co-operation at every stage.

May the Grace of Sri Bhagavan bless one and all of us!

90th Sri Ramana Jayanthi }
25—12—1969 }

President and Members of the
Board of Trustees,
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

Sri Ramanarpithamasthu !

तिमिराणि न केवलं वचोभिः
करुणापाङ्गविलोकितैश्च नृणाम् ।
हृदये प्रसरन्ति मर्दयन्तम्
भगवन्तं रमणं गुरुं नमामि ॥

I worship the great Master, Ramana, Who pierces through the dense darkness prevailing in the human heart not only by word of mouth but also by virtue of Grace imparted by His beneficent glance !

—KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI.



Silent Master's Sovereign Presence



.....
MURUGANAR

in the sovereign Presence where prevails
The stillness of awareness,
And the light supreme of Shiva shines
Revealing one's own inmost being
All comers find their efforts prosper
And ripen into wisdom's fruit.

Those who constrained, perplexed, frustrated
By dire dilemmas still despair not
But turn towards our Royal Master
Are by such devotion straight converted
Into Shiva's radiant goodness.

The hearts of those approaching him in love
The Master's grace transmutes to shining gold,
On me, poor me, lighting it has bestowed
Boundless wealth of bliss transcendent.

Those who enter the circle lit
By the silent guru's grace unfailing
Feast on the fruit of bliss eternal
Far, far beyond the ego's reach.





Gods and men frequent the Presence
Of him whose being is awareness.
Their foolish pride destroyed, their hearts
Made pure by but one glance of grace,
Their faces glow with silent joy —
As they depart.

Those who have sat in truth
In my true Master's Presence
And have enjoyed the welling up
Of peace profound within their hearts —
How can they think thereafter
Of any worldly pleasure ?

As *tapas* true, the Presence of the Lord
Within me shines and all unsought
Surrounds me on all sides.
Killing my 'me', it has renewed
My life, now made immortal
In silent bliss of pure awareness.

Shining alone within my heart,
His Grace triumphant has transformed
My being into his, dissolving
My obstinate and destructive doubts.
This threshold of his Presence is
My long-sought goal of Liberation.

Approach the King whose glance of grace
Removes all bondage.
You will gain virtue and fame,
Much-lauded silence vision-filled,
And the unclouded bliss of Shiva
Mounting heaven-high.

Here at his Feet we find
No limb, no part, no journey's start.
This is the goal attained at last,
Plenary awareness, whole,
Sole bliss supreme, true Being,
Effortless serenity
Light unclouded, boundless vast.

What I worship is the dust
Of his Feet whose grace has made
This slave his own.

Messages

H.H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sharada Peetham, Sringeri.

His Holiness blesses for the success of the commencement of the Meditation Hall and the publication of the Souvenir.

Asir Mantrakshatham and Sri Sharada Sri Chandramouliswara Prasadams are enclosed.



Sri V. V. Giri, President of India, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi-4.

The President is glad to learn that Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, has started the commencement of a Meditation Hall and will also bring out shortly a Souvenir, *Ramana Jyothi*. He sends his best wishes for the success of your endeavours.



Sri G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India, New Delhi.

I am glad to know that a Meditation Hall has been erected in the vicinity of the Samadhi Shrine of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. I send my best wishes for the success of the opening ceremony of the Meditation Hall as well as the Souvenir proposed to be published for commemorating that occasion.

Messages

Sri C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), Madras.

My best wishes for the Meditation Hall project. Every effort to lift the people from the present moral morass is great service.



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Ex-President of India, Madras.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan sends his good wishes for the successful completion of Sri Ramana Auditorium and for the publication you propose to bring out shortly.



Sardar Ujjal Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu, Raj Bhavan, Madras.

I am glad to know that an auditorium to serve as a Meditation Hall is being constructed in Sri Ramanashram. I wish the undertaking success.

Messages

Sri B. Gopala Reddi, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Raj Bhavan, Lucknow.

I am happy to learn that a huge Meditation Hall is being built in front of the Samadhi Shrine of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. I am sure the Meditation Hall will be an inspiring place of worship when completed and fill in a great need.

I wish all your endeavours every success and would like Sri Ramanasramam to continue to attract a large number of devoted disciples who are desirous of meditation and peace of mind.



Dr. K. C. Reddy, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Raj Bhavan, Bhopal.

It gives me great pleasure to know that the construction of a Meditation Hall has been undertaken and that a Souvenir entitled *Ramana Jyothi* will be brought out early.

Ramana Maharshi's contribution in the spiritual sphere is outstanding and I hope that the auditorium will be one of the most sacred spots for the devotees for the realisation of the ancient wisdom.

May the building of the auditorium and the publication of *Ramana Jyothi* be accomplished quickly by Lord's grace, Maharshi's blessings and efforts of the devotees.



Sri B. D. Jatti, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Raj Nivas, Pondicherry.

I hope that the construction of a Meditation Hall in front of the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan will help his devotees to meditate with single-minded devotion and obtain his blessings.

I wish the endeavours of the Souvenir Committee all success.

Messages

Swami Muktananda of Vajreshwari.

I am sure that the holy project would soon be completed for the benefit and welfare of many.



Mathaji Sri Krishna Bai of Anandashram, Kanhangad, Kerala.

May by Beloved Bhagavan's grace your efforts to publish the Souvenir and to complete the construction of the Meditation Hall be crowned with all success, and may by His grace all of you enjoy eternal happiness.



Sri Godavari Mataji of Sakori.

Shree Mataji sends Her Divine Best Wishes and Shree Baba's Blessings for this holy work.



Dr. K. M. Munshi, President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

May the inspiration of the Maharshi lead our hearts to translate his message into our individual lives.



SRI RAMANA, My Master

.....
HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

He is my Master, as he always was
My Master and, forever more, shall be ;
Lo ! I repeat his name without a pause,
A name that offers sustenance to me ;
Each throb of heart measures his memory,
A memory which soothes, yet overawes . . . !
Bound by its chain to him I yet am free,
His Law holds one above all human laws !
Sheer repetition of his Name has grown
Part of my breathing, one with my existence.
He breathes by me ; I never am alone,
Since he possesses me with still persistence ;
He has become my own, my very own
And now, between us stands no time, no distance !

SELF- ENQUIRY

Arthur
Osborne

SRI BHAGAVAN is now as he was. To many he said : "You are not the body." We see now that he was not the body. In his body's lifetime as now guidance came to all who turned to him, whether they could approach him physically or not ; now as in his body's lifetime it radiates with peculiar force from his Ashram at the foot of Arunachala.

"People say I am leaving," he said just before the body's death. "Where could I go ? I am here." Not "I shall be here" but "*I am here.*" He is here in the eternal here and now ; he is here in each one's heart ; he is here also in his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai.

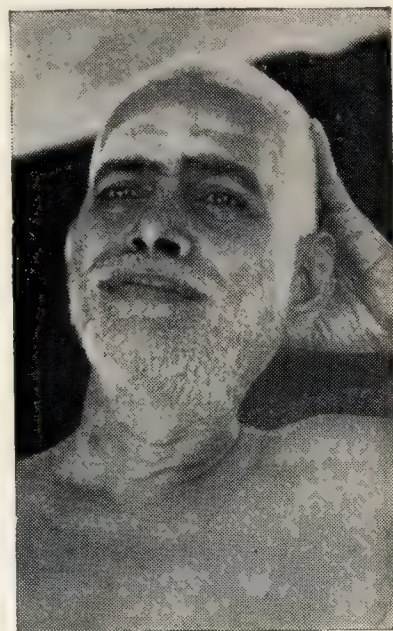
He inaugurated a new path independent of formal rites and initiation to suit the conditions of our age when true guidance is hard to find in any of the orthodox channels and when traditional forms of living do not fit into the patterns of life. It would have been a poor gift if it had been for his lifetime only. He is the Guru now as he was. Those many who never saw him in the body find his guidance no less powerful than we who did. Therefore it is not necessary for any successor to give initiation in his name. The initiation was silent and formless, as it still is ; the guidance was straight to the heart, by-passing words and thought. Understanding is needed, and courage and devotion ; the path is there and the Guide to lead and support you to the Goal.

But how, it may be asked, is one to know that one has been taken up by Sri Ramana Maharshi and become his disciple now that he is no longer here in the body to confirm it ? The same problem existed in his lifetime also.

He very seldom confirmed in words having given initiation. It was to be understood.

And what then ? People who turn to the path require some method, some discipline, some technique. His Grace supports his devotees on whatever path they follow, whether there be in it more devotion or knowledge or action, whether fortified by ritual or not, whether within the framework of any religion or not. And if any change becomes advisable, if any forms or techniques or methods are outgrown and cease to be helpful, some indication will come. Guidance will not fail.

Having said this, however, the opposite side of the medal also should be shown. That is that the method which Bhagavan always recommended in the first place, which he



spoke of as the most simple and direct and put first in all his teaching was Self-enquiry. It follows, therefore, that such of his devotees as can practise it should.

Some people have got a false idea that Self-enquiry is a coldly intellectual method. It is no such thing. Intellectual understanding may be helpful up to a point on one's quest, but it cannot be the quest. 'I am not this body ; I am not the thoughts' may be a useful preliminary to the enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry. The enquiry is not a mental investigation such as a psychologist might indulge in. It is not a probing into the faculties, urges, memories or tendencies of one's conscious or subconscious mind but a quest of the pure I-AM-ness that lies behind all these.

It consists of turning the mind inwards to the sense of being, the feeling of 'I-Am'. Therefore it is not verbal. 'Who Am I?' is not a *mantra*. Its repetition might perhaps help to steady the mind in the early stages but can be of little use really. One hint that Sri Bhagavan gave was that consciousness should not be centred in the head but in the spiritual heart at the right side of the chest, because it is not a question of thinking but of feeling and being. That does not mean thinking about the spiritual heart or meditating on it. When you want to see you don't think about your eyes, you just use them ; so also with the heart.

A man is made up of acting, thinking and being. Being underlies the other two because you can't act or think unless you first are ; but it is usually so covered over by them that it is not perceived. It can be compared to a cinema screen and they to the pictures projected on it. It is the screen that supports the pictures and yet it is so covered over by them that it is not perceived. Only very rarely, for a flash, one is aware of just being and feels it as pure, spontaneous, causeless happiness. It is also pure, thought-free consciousness. The purpose of enquiry is to make one aware of being at will and for longer and longer periods.

This means that, although the term 'meditation' is conventionally used for Self-enquiry, it is not meditation as the dictionary defines it. Meditation requires an object, something to meditate on, whereas in enquiry there is only the subject. You are not looking for anything new, anything outside yourself, but simply concentrating on being, on your self, on the pure 'I Am' of you. It is not thinking but suspending thoughts while retaining consciousness.

Thoughts themselves are a far more persistent obstruction. They rush into the mind in an unending stream. You drive them out and others slip in from behind. You think you are free from these and before you notice, you are indulging others. The only way is persistence. Constant alertness. Not to get carried away by thoughts. To see them aloofly like clouds passing over a clear sky and ask : 'What is this thought ? Who did it come to ? To me, but who am I ?' And so you bring your mind back to enquiry.

But it is not only the wandering nature of the mind and the unending succession of thoughts that is the obstruction ; it is also the ego-drive behind many of the thoughts. This gives them power and makes them far harder to dispel. You may convince yourself doctrinally that there is no ego and have occasional brief glimpses of the being-consciousness which is unruffled happiness when the ego is in fact absent ; but you are drawn to this girl or want to impress this friend or dominate this group ; you resent this criticism or feel slighted by this person ; you feel insecure in your job, cling to your possessions, hanker after money or power : and all of these are affirmations of the ego which you believe not to exist. So long as they exist, it does. If there is no ego who can feel anger or desire, resentment or frustration ?

This means that enquiry is not merely a cold investigation but a battle. The ego, or apparent ego, has to be destroyed. There are paths which set you attacking the various vices individually — lust, arrogance and so on —

and cultivating the opposing virtues ; but Self-enquiry is more direct. Such methods are like lopping the branches off a tree ; so long as the roots and trunk remain, fresh ones will grow. Self-enquiry aims at uprooting the tree itself. If the ego is deprived of one outlet others will develop. But if the ego itself is dissolved the vices in which it found expression will collapse like deflated balloons. But it is constant warfare until the ego really is dissolved.

That is what Self-enquiry is aiming at. It does not teach one any more theory or doctrine. It is quite possible to know all the doctrine that is necessary before you start — "Simply that being is and you are That". What it does, after a certain amount of practice, is to bring increasingly frequent and lengthy experience of pure timeless being which is also pure awareness and unruffled happiness. This is not mental, and yet the mind is aware of it. It is not physical, and yet it is felt physically as a vibration or waveless calm. Once awakened it begins to appear spontaneously even when you are not 'meditating' or to subsist as an under-current to whatever you are doing, to the routine of life, while you are talking, even while thinking.

This is important with regard to method. It explains why Bhagavan preferred his devotees to follow the quest in the life of the world. Sitting daily in 'meditation' is useful, in most cases, indispensable ; but it is not enough. So far as possible fixed times should be set aside

for it, since the mind accustoms itself to them, just as it does with physical functions like eating and sleeping, and responds more readily. For people who are bound by professional and domestic obligations, just after waking in the morning and before going to sleep at night are excellent times. But apart from that Bhagavan would tell people to practise enquiry always, to ask themselves 'Who is doing this?', to engage in activity without the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion. Keeping up this attitude of mind throughout the day's activities is equivalent to remaining alert, to welcoming the sense of being whenever it comes. Constant alertness and remembering is necessary when not 'meditating' no less than concentration when remembering. At first there will be frequent forgetting : that also has to be combated. The 'current of awareness' has to be cultivated and fostered. It is very seldom that there is achievement without effort.

This is the path that Sri Bhagavan laid down. It is independent both of forms and doctrines. It requires no ritual. It can be followed invisibly by the housewife or shopkeeper no less than the monk or yogi. The Grace of Sri Bhagavan is available to all who turn to him, but it is those who strive on this path that utilize it the most fully and the most wisely. It is an unfailing support and an inexhaustible treasure for them.

Reproduced from *THE MOUNTAIN PATH*, January, 1966.

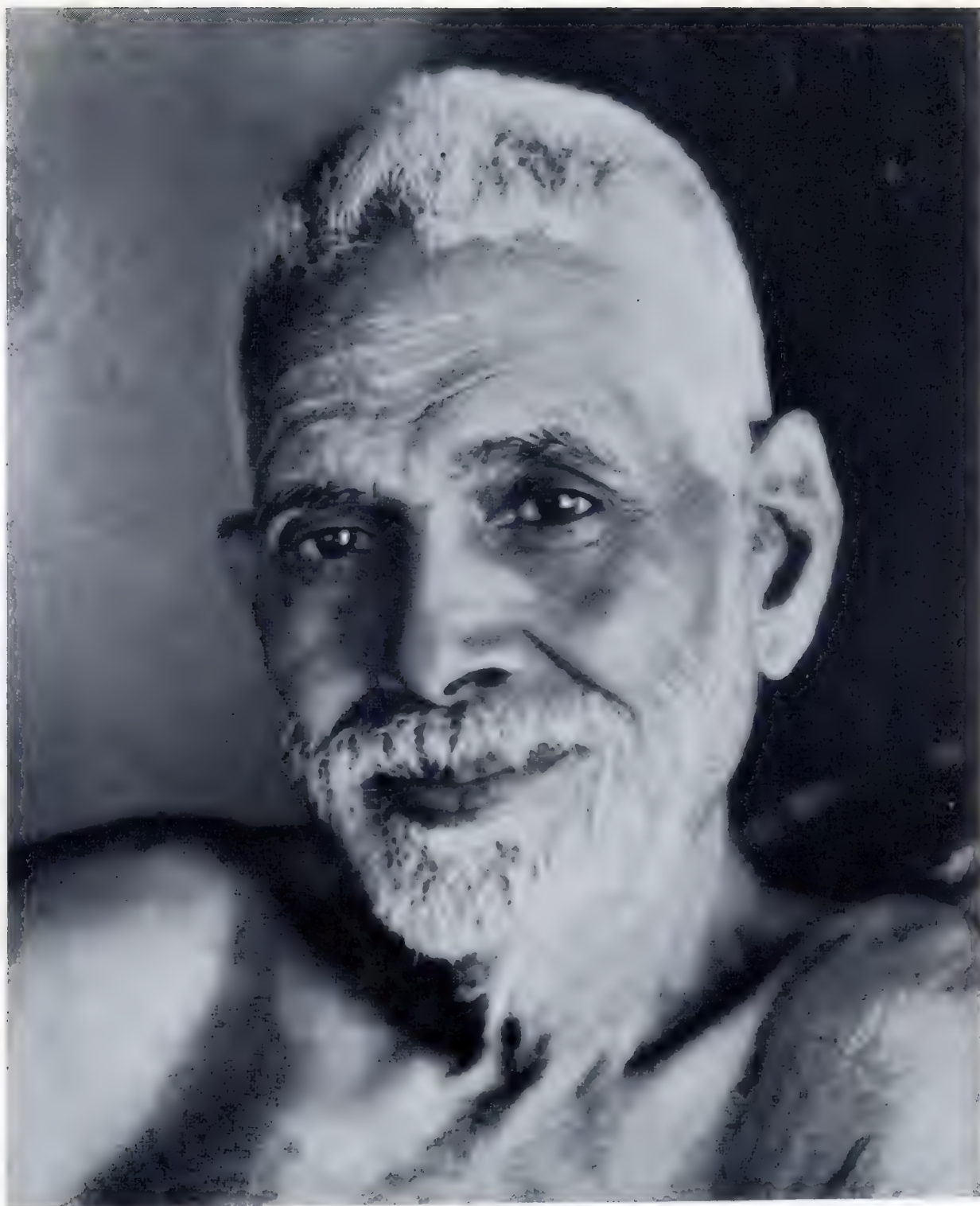
'Things' (objects) are only the perceiving of them by each of us as 'I',

Which is relative perceiving by divided-mind,

Whose Subjectivity is all that any and all of 'us' ARE.

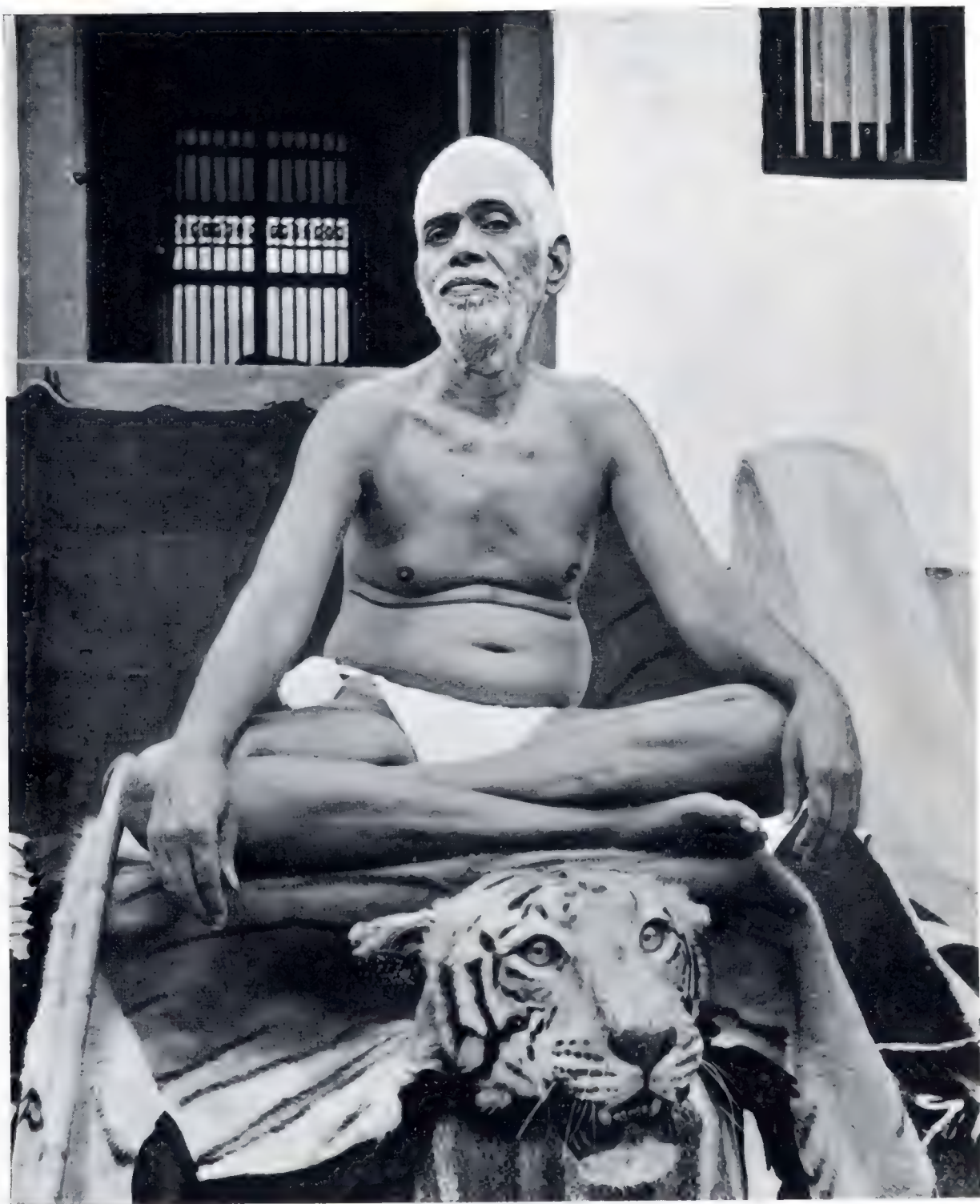
NOTE : Phenomenal 'subjectivity' (what we are conditioned to regard as such) is a myth : it is the reflection of the moon in a puddle. As so often stated : "There is no 'I' but I".

— WEI WU WEI.











Ramana is The Way, Also The Goal

.....
N. BALARAMA REDDY

“ निवासवृक्षः साधूनामापन्नानां परागतिः ।
आर्तानां संश्रयाश्चैव यशसश्चैकभाजनम् ॥ ”

— *Ramayana* : Canto IV — Ch. XV.

ONCE in a way a man of extraordinary spiritual calibre makes his appearance in this world and leaves an indelible impression on the mind of humanity. Such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who lived and moved among us barely twenty years ago.

His earthly life spanned seventy years, the last fifty-four of which were spent in Tiruvannamalai, a well-known pilgrim centre in South India. Led by a mysterious urge he arrived here in 1896 as a lad of sixteen, but like Suka a finished product. Although thereafter he never left the place he attracted the attention of the whole world by the force of his personality and the splendour of his realization.

A large and ancient Siva temple adorns the township of Tiruvannamalai, and a remarkable hill called Arunachala, famous in legend and tradition, overlooks it, adding beauty and grandeur to the place. In the occult view this hill is a blazing mass of spiritual vibrations. Through the centuries it has attracted many saints and recluses who have by the fire of their austerities and the power of their realization recharged with holiness this hallowed spot. It is from here that the Maharshi radiated light and peace for over half-a-century. He loved the hill deeply and sang of it, the Hill of Grace.

A few weeks before his arrival at Tiruvannamalai a notable event took place in his life. He was then a student at Madurai, a renowned temple city and a Citadel of ancient Tamil culture. One day in the summer of 1896 a

sudden and intense fear of death seized him. Acting under its impact he made a super-human effort to solve the mystery of death by diving within to the source of being. Succeeding in this attempt he disengaged the undying self from the perishable body. This took him less than half-an-hour. Such speed in spiritual attainment is rare and has few parallels in the annals of hagiology. In his case, the upanishadic aspiration, '*Lead me from Death to Immortality*', मृत्योर्मासमृतं गमय, came to be fulfilled literally in a matter of minutes.

For the first few years of his stay at Tiruvannamalai he hardly spoke. This made people think that he was under a vow of silence. He never took any such vow. He had no desire and no need to speak. Or perhaps, he thought that keeping silent could be an effective defence against disturbance. Similarly, observing him immersed in himself with eyes closed practically all the time and oblivious of bodily care the onlookers got the impression that he was making a determined effort to attain or carrying on severe *tapas*, which also was not true, unless by *tapas* is meant a natural and uninterrupted state of Self-abidance. After his *death experience* at Madurai all effort ceased. There was nothing to gain or nothing to lose, for it was a state which has neither an *above* nor a *below*, यस्मात्परं नाऽपरमस्ति किञ्चित्.

Crowds poured into his wondrous presence just to have a look at his God-like face and be blessed by his benign glance. The changing panorama or the commotion around him did not affect him in the least. Firmly ensconced in the self, he was 'like a tree fixed and motionless', वृक्ष इव स्तब्धः, to use the upanishadic phrase.

Those who gathered round him comprised all classes of devotees. The pious and the

good-natured content to pass their days in the sage's holy presence took their residence near him. Those weighed down by calamity or in dire distress were also drawn to him with the hope of being rescued by his all-powerful grace. To the latter he was an unfailing prop, to the former a secure shelter.

“ निवासवृक्षः साधूनां आपन्नानां परागतिः ”

There were ripe souls too, longing for liberation, who besought and readily secured his divine help and practical guidance. Solely given to spiritual practice they passed their days in his puissant presence and liberating proximity. He was their goal and also their way.

He taught both through silence and speech. His silence was so powerful as to silence the mind of the seeker with right receptivity. When he used speech for instruction, the effect could be socratic.

His Ashram was a real home devoid of the rigid rules and crippling regulations usually enforced in soulless institutions. From 3 a.m. when hot water was ready for bath till 10 or 11 p.m. when late arrivals could have their food, the sage's hospitable abode used to hum with joyous activity. Visitors and devotees, sometimes numbering hundreds, sat with him at meal, and a motherly concern enveloped them as he looked around and ate with them. His followers never lacked his fatherly protection, which was theirs for the wishing. Like a true friend he shared their joys and sorrows. As a Guru in the highest tradition he guided with unerring insight and infinite patience the spiritual aspirants towards Immortality and Peace.

A full-blown *Jivanmukta* he was a unique repository of divine splendour !

The Serious All-Important Question

DOUGLAS E. HARDING

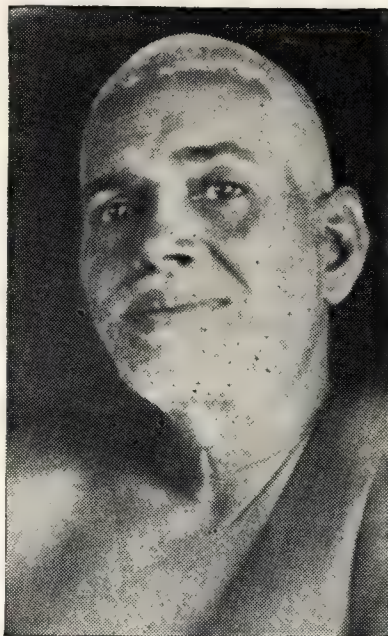
THE main reason for Maharshi's widespread and continued appeal in the West is his insistence on asking: *Who am I?* This is the really crucial question for the modern world. It crops up everywhere, not merely in philosophical and religious circles. Psychiatrists find their patients — dimly aware of the place where healing lies — obsessed with it. It is one of the chief themes of the more intelligent pop singers — Petula Clark, for instance, has a song actually entitled 'Who am I?', and, though the answers are inconclusive, at least the question is relentlessly insisted upon. Young people are particularly concerned, as never before in history, with the problem of personal identity and the meaning of their own existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that Maharshi should interest them.

A fair proportion of these young people (and some older ones, too) are really serious about this all-important question: they feel it is not merely for asking, but for answering also. It is not for them a rhetorical question or incantation or pious formula expressing

some vague aspiration, but a matter to be settled now. Life is short and precarious, and it would be negligent to die before one had made time to ask who it is that is alive. If *this* question isn't interesting and central and urgent, what question is? If I'm serious about it, if I mean business, I shall demand a clear and prompt reply.

As clear and prompt reply as if I were asking the question, '*Where am I?*' Suppose I have lost my way in a strange city: I don't shut my eyes and ears and recite the words, '*Where am I?*' till I die of hunger and exhaustion. I hurriedly consult a map and street-names and passers-by till I succeed in locating myself. I put my question clearly, expect a precise answer, take that answer seriously, and act on it without delay.

'*Who am I?*' is a far more vital question than '*Where am I?*' Fortunately, the answer also is far more straightforward and simple and accessible — according to Ramana Maharshi, and our own experience if only we will attend to and trust it.



There is no doubt about what I *appear* to be. Stationed out there, my observers see me as a man. And there is no doubt about I *am*. Stationed here, I see myself as not a man, not an animal, not a plant, not a thing of any sort, but as this simple No-thing, or Clarity, or Void, or Essence, or Light — the names are many, the experience one and simplicity itself. What lies right here is for me brilliantly obvious and wholly accessible — accessible not to thought, but to direct introspection.

To the question 'When can I thus see who I am?', Maharshi answers: 'Now'. I can find no record of his ever having said to anybody: 'You aren't ready yet to see who you are. Go away and discipline yourself, practise this or that kind of meditation for so many years, and then come back to me.' Instead, and whatever the disciple's condition or problem, he says, 'The answer to your problem is to see who has it, now. What are you waiting for? You *are* the Self, and never have been anything else.'

To the question 'How can I thus see who I am?', Maharshi answers: 'There is nothing to do but be yourself, and what could be easier and more natural than that? Just stop thinking and see what it's like being you, and not

being the body which others see. The only reason you aren't enlightened about who you are is that you *think* yourself out of it.' Or words to that effect.

If I have the sense to take Ramana Maharshi seriously, if I have any real respect for his teaching, if I attend to what he actually says rather than the human personality the message comes through, if I genuinely want to discover who I am and am not frightened to death of doing so, if I am at all sincere in this inquiry — then I shall just look and see. And, once having seen, I shall not dishonestly pretend I don't see. Just as the lost traveller, having been shown exactly where he is, briefly expresses his thanks and goes his way, so I (if I am equally sensible) say, without embarrassment or mock-modesty, 'Thank you, I see', and get on with my seeing — that Self-seeing which is from now on my true meditation.

May this meditation be practised in the Sri Ramana Auditorium! In other words, may its users be true devotees. Who is the true devotee: the one who in all simplicity does what the Master tells him, or the one who so adores the Master that he wouldn't presume to follow in those holy footsteps?

Unity

Sri Ramalinga Swamikal

One It is and many!
 One in the many too;
 The one within the one;
 One that ever is one.
 Not one it is, nor many,
 Neither many in one;
 Not one within another,
 But one that ever is one.
 The one within the one
 And the one not in the one,
 Becoming one in oneness,
 Remain the One alone.

The Master Key

.....
'RAMANAMANI'



THE great leave the world a lot better than they found it. Bhagavan's method of Self-Enquiry has enriched the world spiritually, as few others have. It would come in handy and break the deadlock in any human situation that presents a problem.

Problems or their solution, happiness or misery, good or bad have no separate existence apart from him who perceives them. The seer or perceiver is the vital entity, and not the seen or perceived. You can take any instance and this truth will apply. And Bhagavan would have us concentrate on the seer or 'I' and ignore all else. Self-Enquiry is direct, in contrast to traditional methods which are indirect. And these other methods cannot but lead eventually to Self-Enquiry and Self-Absorption. Bhagavan advises you to take the direct path, and avoid losing precious time.

Lord of himself, though not of lands.
And having nothing, he hath all.

As an ideal, this is all right and many would readily subscribe to it. But what about the problems before realizing this ideal? Does

everyone have the strength of conviction or feel the call of the spirit? Even if one does, how many doubts and what amount of despair have to be surmounted? These are problems for the general student of religion whose interest or insight is not deep. It would be useful to analyse these problems and see how Bhagavan's teaching resolves them.

A vexatious question is that of religious denomination. Although all religious people are participants alike in the spiritual endeavour of the world, the over-zealous followers of each religion are not prepared to accord an equal status to other faiths and would assert the superiority of their own. There has never been in practice much inter-religious harmony or understanding. Relations, friendly or otherwise, between peoples or even nations, have often been governed by religion as the sole criterion. And there is no real encouragement for comparative religion, though a few sporadic attempts are made.

A harmless student of comparative religion who finds, say some parallels between Krishna and Christ would very probably be shouted down by the Hindus as well as the Christians.

The normal Christian could never concede divinity to anyone but Christ!

This malady of inter-religious discord offers an excuse for the unbeliever who declares that there is no truth in any religion.

From the standpoint of Bhagavan, there can be no such discord. The Self has no religion. The Self is the same for the Hindu, and the Christian, and everyone else. The question of superiority is so swiftly settled if one sticks to the Self! There is no doubt that the multi-religious confusion is straightened out if we turn to Bhagavan.

Apart from inter-religious problems, there are intra-religious problems too. Religion in theory, whether it is theology, cosmology or metaphysics, could cause confusion not only to the beginner but also to the advanced seeker. The reason is that contradictory conclusions are reached by theory. The reality of the world is asserted by some; it is stoutly denied by others. The identity of the Self and God is taught by some; it is vehemently challenged by others. A mass of theory is there, only to get one in a tangle. The problem is: Which theory is correct? Or even for practice, which path is most efficacious — *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* or *jnana*? The deeper we delve into theory, the more we flounder in doubts. Not unoften, dissatisfaction at the whole thing is the result. Theories are, like Gratiano's reasons, "as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

But then Sri Ramana does not bind you to any theory; so no theoretical doubt will ever assail his followers. No theory is required to tell that one exists. The search into the one existing Self will keep away searches or researches outside the Self. Even as a start, this liberation from theory (for liberation from *samsara*!) is a great thing.

Apart from these questions, there is the fundamental one: What proof can you

adduce for the existence of God, or the validity of religion? In the modern age religion should satisfy and convince; it cannot afford to assert and demand belief. The confrontation with materialistic fancies or the scientific method is no mean problem.

Science can offer spectacular proof of its theories. Technology can give practical means of comfortable living. One cannot ignore the mental satisfaction and material comfort offered by science and its offshoot, technology. The value and impact of the scientific method demand recognition. It is obvious that religion must evolve and offer its own method of experimentation utterly detached from dogma.

Just such an experimental method is provided in Self-Enquiry. It is the most intense and intensely personal spiritual experimentation. One doesn't have to believe in anything except oneself. Even if someone believes that nothing exists, he still admits by implication that he exists. If non-existence were the truth, to whom should one tell it, except oneself? If you cling to the Self, all else will be transcended; the Self exists all through. Thus the method does away with the necessity for belief.

Thus, though the goal reached is that of all religions, Sri Ramana's appeal is not in the name of religion. The removal of the label from religion is a great service. What is required is no formal adherence to any dogma but an intense and sincere effort to search and find Truth. If this is done, we shall see the end of what Robert Burns condemns as

"Religious pride

In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!"

Bhagavan reveals the Truth in all its purity. He has given the master key to the vast treasures of the spiritual world which every one is now free to discover and enjoy for himself.

To drive away from inside a cave the darkness that has been there for a thousand years another thousand years are not necessary — a candle would be enough! The moment a light is brought into the cave, the dense darkness which had occupied it for centuries vanishes in a moment. So also the *vasanas*, accumulated through thousands of years and thousands of births, just disappear, as it were, by the Light of the Guru's Grace. The only effort needed to take the light into the cave of darkness is praying for grace at the feet of the Master! Once the darkness disappears all suffering due to ignorance also goes and life becomes what it should be, its purpose achieved. Guru's Grace is so simple, yet so very powerful!

* * *

There are great contradictions, at every stage and in every statement of not only the saints and sages, but also in the Upanishads and Vedas. 'There is God', 'Why worry over God?', 'World does exist', 'World is *mithya*', 'There is no maya', 'Maya is all powerful', 'Jiva is', 'Jiva is not'..... In a rupee coin there are two sides—head and tail. Yet the person who makes use of it never bothers about the sides. Though the existence of the two sides is not actually denied, yet for all practical purposes they are non-existent. When there is advertence to the sides, as in tossing, the value of the coin is of no account. So also, pairs of opposites and exact contradictions do exist and appear in the statements of the sages. They are not negated; but they are transcended. Being-Existence is the Whole. Contradictory ideas and statements do not have any real independent truth. They are used as stepping stones to be left behind. Hence, to utilise the full



value of spiritual truth as Existence, Wholeness of Being, the sages and Upanishads present these contradictions and integrate them in the Supreme Truth of Oneness according to the varying development of the seeker. Let us utilise the coin as a whole and not worry over its two sides!

* * *

There is an obvious difference between theory and practice in spirituality. The philosophers are usually concerned with the former and the mystics and seers with the latter. Both are necessary. Without practice, theory is of no value at all. But strangely enough even great jnanis like Sri Ramana Maharshi, who did not even bother about God before he had the *death experience*, formulated his teachings in theory later for the sake of seekers! Sankara and Ramanuja too established philosophical systems of thought. The relation between theory and practice can be explained by the two injunctions: "Only when you know swimming should you get into the water; and, only by getting into the water could you learn swimming!" The former statement symbolises the theories of philoso-

Reflexions

.....
'SEIN'
.....

phers and the latter the practical methods shown by mystics and seers.

But then, only a practical Sage — a man of experience — could give the theory. What we usually do is to start first with theory, i.e., we always stand on the shore and justify our standing there and also preventing others from getting into the water! The man swimming in the water could use theory to guide novices from drowning. Theory could be promulgated only by a practical man, *a man who knows*. Only the Rishi who knew the Ultimate could give out a theory on the Ultimate! Let us dive within ourselves, before talking of a spiritual heart! Let us experience IT before we could expound it!

* * *

Practice starts within the individual from the heart; theory from the intellect. Practice starts with the I; theory is for the You and He.

* * *

‘Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself’—CHRIST.

How to put this famous statement into practice? There is a simple way — reverse the sentence and follow it. ‘Love thyself as thou lovest thy neighbour’! The meaning is the oneness of being; Sri Ramana said: ‘There are no others. There is only one Self.’

* * *

Why should one have learning or theoretical knowledge at all, since this has ultimately to be given up as an obstacle for Final Release? Why carry heavy stones while swimming? The answer is simple — we are not merely swimmers but are also pearl-divers! The tying of stones to our waists is absolutely essential, to dive deep into the water to obtain the precious pearl (Self)! Disciplining the mind by the process of learning may help some.

* * *

There is often misunderstanding of the relation of sadhana and siddhi (not the occult

power but the goal of sadhana). The confusion arises from conceiving sadhana as the cause or means and siddhi as the effect or goal. In fact it is a single process and the two are interdependent. To regard sadhana as the cause and siddhi as the effect is like regarding the mechanism of a clock as the cause and time as its effect! The working of the mechanism and the passage of time proceed simultaneously. Sadhana and siddhi likewise are simultaneous and interrelated processes. Individual practice and striving is thus stressed by seers, since Awareness — *Sakshi Chaitanya* — is Ever-Present but veiled by ignorance. The expulsion of ignorance is not a cause and the dawning of Wisdom, the effect. Disappearance of ignorance and unveiling of Wisdom are a single simultaneous process! Thus for a genuine seeker, a *mumukshu*, the *sadhana* and *siddhi* are not separate experiences, but one continuous increasing Awareness!

* * *

Through meditation — Self-enquiry — death can be conquered. How? Action is the result of the thinking process, the mind. Objects are but solidified thoughts. All three karmas — *sanchita*, *āgami* and *prārabdha* — are thus due solely to thoughts. When thoughts are eradicated, actions are put an end to; and since there is no thinking, no memory, the past is no more and since there is no desire, there is no future too. So the three karmas are nullified.

Of course, the vast stored-up karmas are stupendous and they can be destroyed only by continuous effort, an uninterrupted current of self-enquiry and meditation. So, practically speaking, by stopping thinking, the mind is slowly weakened and stilled till ultimately it merges into the Self. It is like peeling an onion layer after layer till nothing remains. By destruction of mind and merging it in the Self, through ending thoughts, death is conquered!





The Great Quest

T. P. R.

THE aim of this Souvenir is to help the completion of the New Meditation Hall and Auditorium in front of Sri Bhagavan's shrine, to shelter more and more of His devotees seeking with surrendered hearts the fruition of self-knowledge and for lasting happiness.

Since creation, the biography of man has been a repetition, and it is vain to approach Sri Bhagavan through the medium of speech. The spoken word cannot encompass understanding, and if ever a book of his teachings were to be compiled, the best title would be "Himself". By His grace and influence people saw in Him a living embodiment of Truth and tradition of Vedanta — an embodiment living and lived in our very midst.

No one ever doubts one's own existence, even if everything else were to be a matter for doubt. This Awareness, so native and natural to each individual, This Self — the "I" in him —, is a matter of direct, immediate experience and needs no proof. This *self-awareness* — being-consciousness — is basic to all other "knowing" and "objectivity". Sri Bhagavan tells us that this experience, this awareness of *being* is present in every individual, as the "I" in him, but for which there could not be any notions of the world or God. To Him, all manifestations revealed only the same non-dual Brahman, the same Reality. This Reality is with us during all our waking, dreaming, and deep-sleep states. The Supreme Being (Reality) is one and unchanging, through all multiplicity. That alone "IS". Hence the notion that anything but the Self exists has to be renounced. Whatever name



you give it, there is no Brahman or God apart from the Self.

The question *Who am I?*, the quest of the Self, was to Sri Bhagavan a "concrete expression of a Reality that is LIVED, and it is this authenticity which imparted to every word of His utterances an inimitable freshness — the flavour of Truth embodied in the most immediate way."¹ To Him there was no *other* to reckon or covet, no plura-

lity or multiplicity, the root of all ignorance and bondage. This activity of PRESENCE found its highest expression in Sri Bhagavan who manifested the supremacy of contemplative non-action, radiating the truth of the Upanishads in direct and simplest expression. The whole of our Vedanta is in the Great Question "WHO AM I?"

On this occasion again it behoves us all to pray to our Divine Father, the sole refuge of His children, for guiding sustenance in all our hopes and struggles. No homage paid or service done will be greater than to *see Him, listen to Him, and obey Him in our heart of hearts*. Can there be a greater bliss than to

be free of the narrowness of "You" and "Me", and see that the chains that bind us are only fleeting dreams? The body is transient, the mind more so. The Ego is the root of all multiplicity, desire and greed. Neither the body nor this world troubles us during sleep. Let us preserve the secret of this happiness in us, seeking the source of "I" and laying the Mind to rest. Truly then our waking life will only be as passing pictures on the screen.

My humble prostrations to Sri Bhagavan's Lotus Feet.

¹ Quoted from Marco Pallis's translation of Frithjof Schuon's *Language of the Self*.

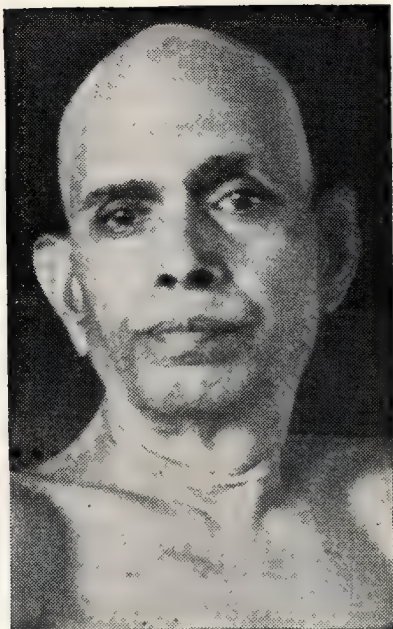
AMRITA NADI

.....
Suri Nagamma

IN 1943, a pandit who come to the Ashram went on talking to Bhagavan for full four days about the *Amrita Nadi* and its significance. Bhagavan was nodding his head saying that the *Nadi* would act like this and like that. Having heard their discussions, I felt aggrieved that I had had no experience of any such *Nadi*. After the visitor had left, I met Bhagavan while he was returning from the *gosala* side and said, "You have been discussing at length the *Amrita Nadi*", but before I could finish the sentence He said with some impatience, "Why do you worry about all that?" I ventured to say, "You have been discussing it for the last four days and so I thought I could know something about it from you." Bhagavan replied, "You thought so, did you? He was asking something based on the Sastras and I replied to him accordingly. Why should you worry about

it? All that you should do is to follow the enquiry 'Who Am I'?" So saying, he walked away.

Two days after that when someone in the hall raised the topic regarding *Amrita Nadi*, Bhagavan coolly said, "Yes, that is an idea." Surprised at it, I asked, "Is the *Amrita Nadi* an idea only?" "Yes. What else is it but an idea? Is not the body itself an idea?" Saying this, Bhagavan looked at me with compassion. That was enough for me. His teaching went home — all my doubts disappeared and my usual *sadhana* became firm and purposeful. As a result of God's grace earned in the course of innumerable births I have been, in this birth, privileged to be at the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan — to listen to his teachings and meditate on them. What more do I need?



Guru Is Within

.....
G. N. DALEY

THERE is no Teacher, nor is there anyone to be taught, therefore there is no Teaching. This is the message of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the greatest and most Enlightened Teacher ever to appear for the benefit of mankind. There is nothing nor is there anyone to become Enlightened since the Self is already Realised. It is an error of discernment which creates the notion that the ego is separate from the world and its contents and that the ego can become Realised. The ego is a part of the world just as any object which can be perceived by the normal waking consciousness and cannot become anything other than what it already is — a relative appearance.

This vortex of energy and vibration, habit and tendency cannot be taught. Awareness which already exists within everyone, everywhere, is imperishable and changeless. The task is not to learn or to acquire but to unlearn and relinquish the obscuring mental processes and attachments and the desires which bind. The ego, a relative thing in a relative world, whose faulty vision wrongly interprets the vibrational data which are fed to it through the functions of the senses alone, obscures the Self. This malfunction of the mind due to erroneous attachment and wrong identification is the real obstacle.

Bhagavan clearly stated that the Guru is within, not somewhere outside in the world of appearances, and to all who came to him for Grace and Enlightenment He taught this one ultimate and simple truth : that everyone is already Realised Self and that Guru and Grace are within, and that neither can be found or created anywhere. In this context perhaps His most piercing and significant statement was, "Is there anyone who does not know the Self? Each knows yet does not know the Self. A strange paradox." The paradox exists only in the mind and not to Awareness which needs neither Guru nor His Grace to become Realised. What Bhagavan means by this paradoxical statement is that

you consist of body, mind and consciousness and that neither the body nor the mind which are insentient can ever become Realised. He simply states that Realisation already exists because you are conscious, but so long as there is identity with the body and the mind Realisation is impossible.

Bhagavan also stated, "Grace always IS and is not given." Thus a further paradox arises in the mind which tries hard to solve it. The answer lies not in the mind nor in the outside world which can be likened to the magnetic traces of a video-tape — but without the tape itself — which in reality exist within the Self. In the same way the ego can be likened to a specific and definable magnetic area on the magnetic traces of manifestation. Neither exists as either the spatial or the temporal extensions which the functions of the mind and senses cause them to appear. Ego-consciousness is the Self "touching", permeating and identifying itself with that small magnetic area, that one point of body and mind, that particular vibration called ego-insentient, apart from, and yet within the Self. Thus the answer to the paradox can only be sought and solved through the gateway of ego-consciousness.

As consciousness turns inward, or away from the world of manifestation and from the feeling and thought processes of the ego and enters into the higher spiritual area of the soul — which is neither a bridge nor a structure but which functions like a bridging structure — there is an order, or quality, of Awareness different from ego-consciousness. And with the awakening of this Awareness, this non-spatial, non-temporal Beingness, the Guru, within is quite clearly seen as the One whom Bhagavan states we should seek by asking, *Who am I?*, and thus is Grace vouchsafed.

Bhagavan's attitude to religions and religious practices further emphasises His Statement that Guru is within, for He did not recommend or advocate the use of any religious practice, rite or ritual excepting for

those who may have found it necessary. This is because it is all too easy to become involved in and identified with the concepts, the rites and the rituals all of which are a part of world appearance. All religions and paths, whether group or individual, are one in essence and are equally valid for those who use these means in a sincere and devout manner, but finally the forms of the religions and paths must be transcended when the followers are ripe. God, Grace and Guru are the one innermost essence of Awareness, which is revealed or experienced when attachment to all forms is broken however exalted or aspirational they may be in their search for God or the Self. A thought is no more or no less a form than is a stone or a piece of wood and a sound has as much or as little substance. Attachment to all things should be allowed to fall away when the essence has been extracted and assimilated in order that the Guru within may be born. Guru within is born in the void of the stillness and the silence, in the perfect quietude of the mind in meditation. Bhagavan said, "*Be what you are Be yourself* and nothing more." This is the perfect state of meditation and it can be attained either in solitude or in noisy crowded places. Much practice is needed before this state of Beingness is permanently established but this mental non-attachment can be engaged in anywhere at any time by simply keeping the mind fixed on the enquiry, *Who am I?* In the beginning other thoughts will intrude and environmental distractions will cause the mind to wander, but if each time this is observed the mind is brought back to the enquiry this single thought will continue to arise automatically until it is a continuous and one-pointed meditation. Thus with the mind stilled and at peace a process of automatic detachment from the world of appearances and from thought arising therefrom commences and slowly becomes stronger until Awareness — not ego-consciousness — is experienced as a movement from time to eternity. This is the

beginning of living in the eternal, but even here, at this point, whilst Awareness coexists with habit and tendency there will be many fluctuations in the state of Beingness. Bhagavan further said, "TO BE is to realise." Very well then, when these fluctuations are experienced as discord within or without, when thinking runs riot or people and circumstances involve and distract, return..... just *BE*, and continue to *BE* as Bhagavan instructed.

The Guru within is the bliss of this Awareness where, sans time, sans space, He is waiting for you to look inwards, to seek in-

wards, and to beckon with your sadhana or surrender — the Guru awaits the cessation of your involvement in the world of non-being, and at the right time His Grace will reveal His Presence there, within.

Neither His apparent proximity, nor His physical presence or absence is of any consequence so long as He is felt and known to be the Guru within..... O, Bhagavan lead our wandering minds away from the distractions of thought and world appearance that in the stillness we may again be united with our Source, the One Self.

Teacher and Pupil

When Bhagavan was living on the hill-side, his old Tamil teacher came all the way from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai to see for himself the change in his former pupil and pay his respects to the now famous Maharshi.

He sat unobtrusively among the visitors, but soon Bhagavan recognized him and had a copy of *Akshara-Mana-Malai* ("The Marital Garland of Letters") put into his hands. Glancing through it, the Pandit was pleased with its deep devotion and sound philosophy, but felt the need for help in understanding the full import of some passages. Mustering courage, he stood up, read out a verse and asked Bhagavan to explain it.

"Look at this," Bhagavan protested. "I ran away from school and home to escape such questions. And here he is after me, asking the same old question, 'What does this passage mean'?"

Everyone enjoyed the affection behind this mock complaint. Like the elders who learnt from Lord Swaminatha and Dakshinamurti, the schoolmaster whose questions were once intended to test the pupil's knowledge had now turned a disciple whose questions were aimed at removing his own ignorance.

Jnana Marga and Bhagavan

.....
SADHU NATANANANDA

ONE notices four stages in the history of jnana marga.

1. After a long debate during the age of the Vedas and Upanishads the issue whether Karma or Jnana was the direct path to *moksha* remained unsettled. Even during the age of the Brahma Sutras, this doubt persisted as can be seen from *Sukopakhyaana*.

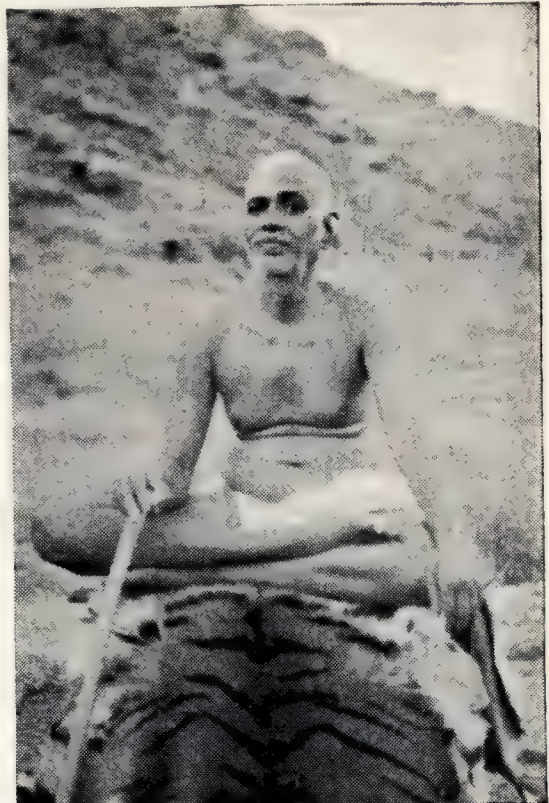
2. The Gita, accepting the inescapability of Karma, recommends *nishkāma karma* and the giving up of the sense of doership. While conceding that jnana alone is *moksha*, it still prescribes *nishkāma karma* surrendered to the Lord as the means for gaining and safeguarding jnana.

3. Sri Sankara, recognizing the binding nature of virtuous as of sinful action and following the sruti formula *nakarmana*, prescribed perpetual dhyana as the way to *moksha*.

4. Sri Ramana's service consists in showing clearly and teaching consistently that this "perpetual dhyana" is only abidance in the Self. The following summary of his teaching contains his special contribution to the development and purification of the way of jnana :

"You think you were born one day and will die some day. Consider who is born and is to die. Do such thoughts occur in dreamless sleep? During this thought-free state you existed without thoughts and without the world. When you wake up thoughts and the world appear. Why, how and whence did this world appear? You remain the same whether asleep or awake, and with or without the world. The projected picture, the

beholder, the light and the screen — all these are yourself. You are not this body. Like the indivisible and boundless sky above, you are pure awareness and can neither come nor go. This is the truth, but you find it difficult to conceive it and even more difficult to experience it. Anyhow practise remembering the real Self whenever you think of yourself as the body. *All that is needed is *sraddha* and more *sraddha*."



धर्मे नाशमुपागते त्रिभुवने पर्याकुले पापतः
प्रज्ञाने परितो गिरां पथि मुधा सञ्चार्यमाणे जनैः ॥
सद्भावे परमेश्वरस्य च पितुः सन्देहदोलां गते
द्वीपः कैतवमर्त्यं केकितुरग त्वामन्तरा कस्सताम् ॥

Now, when righteousness is at an end, when the three worlds are struggling in the net-work of misery, when scholars having lost sight of Truth are learnedly discussing polemics to no end, and when the very existence of God, the Father, is disputed Who else could be our Refuge except Thee !

— KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI.





The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their past deed — their **prārabdhakarma**. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, — try how hard you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to stop it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is for one to be silent.”

—Sri Bhagavan (Self-Realisation)





“If one watches whence this notion ‘[]’ springs, the mind is absorbed into that. That is **TAPAS.**”

“When a **mantra** is repeated, if attention is directed to the source whence the **mantra**-sound is produced, the mind is absorbed in that. That is **TAPAS.**”



"Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made?" asks Sri Ramana Maharshi. "Where is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself is an ignorant man. He who regards himself as the Self is the Enlightened One who has realized the Self."

There is no more monstrous superstition in the history of mankind than our obsessive identification with the body. As long as we are helpless victims of this primeval ignorance — called "Avidya" in the Vedanta tradition, "the Fall" in the Jewish-Christian tradition — we cannot help living on the physical level, on the ego level, as feverish fragments in a world of feverish fragments. As long as we believe that we are the body, the Buddha reminds us, which is subject to change, we cannot escape the last great change called death.

The Gates of Joy

Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

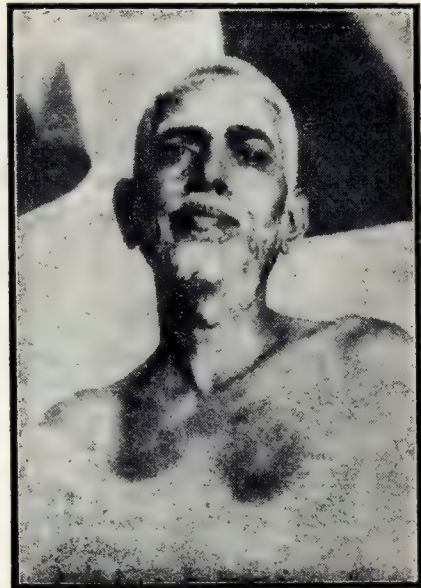
As Yama, King of Death, points out to his youthful questioner in (my translation of the) *Katha Upanishad* :

"Far beyond
Their eyes, hypnotized by the world of sense,
Opens the way to immortality.
'I am the body; when my body dies,
I die.' Living in this superstition,
They fall, life after life, under my sway."

It is not possible to correct this fatal fallacy intellectually by reading books on how to conquer death or by participating in seminars on immortality. The intellect, however useful

in dealing with finite phenomena, is helpless when it comes to knowing the Self who is infinite, immortal and indivisible. For this supreme purpose we need a higher mode of knowing, and it is this higher mode that we can develop through the regular practice of Meditation.

In the simple words of Sri Ramana Maharshi, "Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts. Distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness. By constant meditation it gains strength, that is to say, its weakness of fugitive thought gives



place to the enduring background free from thoughts. This expanse devoid of thoughts is the Self."

Meditation is a tremendous adventure to be undertaken only under the loving guidance of one who knows he is the Self. As the King of Death conveys to Nachiketa :

"He who sees himself in all
And all in him, helps one through spiritual
Osmosis to realize the Self oneself.
This awakening you have known comes not
Through logic and scholarship, but from
Close association with a realized Teacher.
Wise are you, Nachiketa, because you

Seek the Self Eternal. May we have more
Seekers like you!"

All of us who are seeking the Self Eternal
need the grace of Sri Ramana Maharshi to
walk on the path sharp like the razor's edge
as the *Katha Upanishad* puts it. In the great
words of the King of Death,

"The wise, realizing through meditation,
The timeless Self, beyond all perception,

Hidden in the cave of the heart,
Leave pleasure and pain far behind.
The man who knows he is neither body
Nor mind, but the immemorial Self,
The divine principle of existence,
Finds the source of all joy and lives in joy
Abiding. I see the gates of joy
Are opening for you, Nachiketa."

May the gates of joy open for all of us
through the grace of Sri Bhagavan!

Perceiving

.....
Wei Wu Wei

There is no perceiver,

There is no object perceived,

Both are conceptual suppositions of relative (divided) mind,

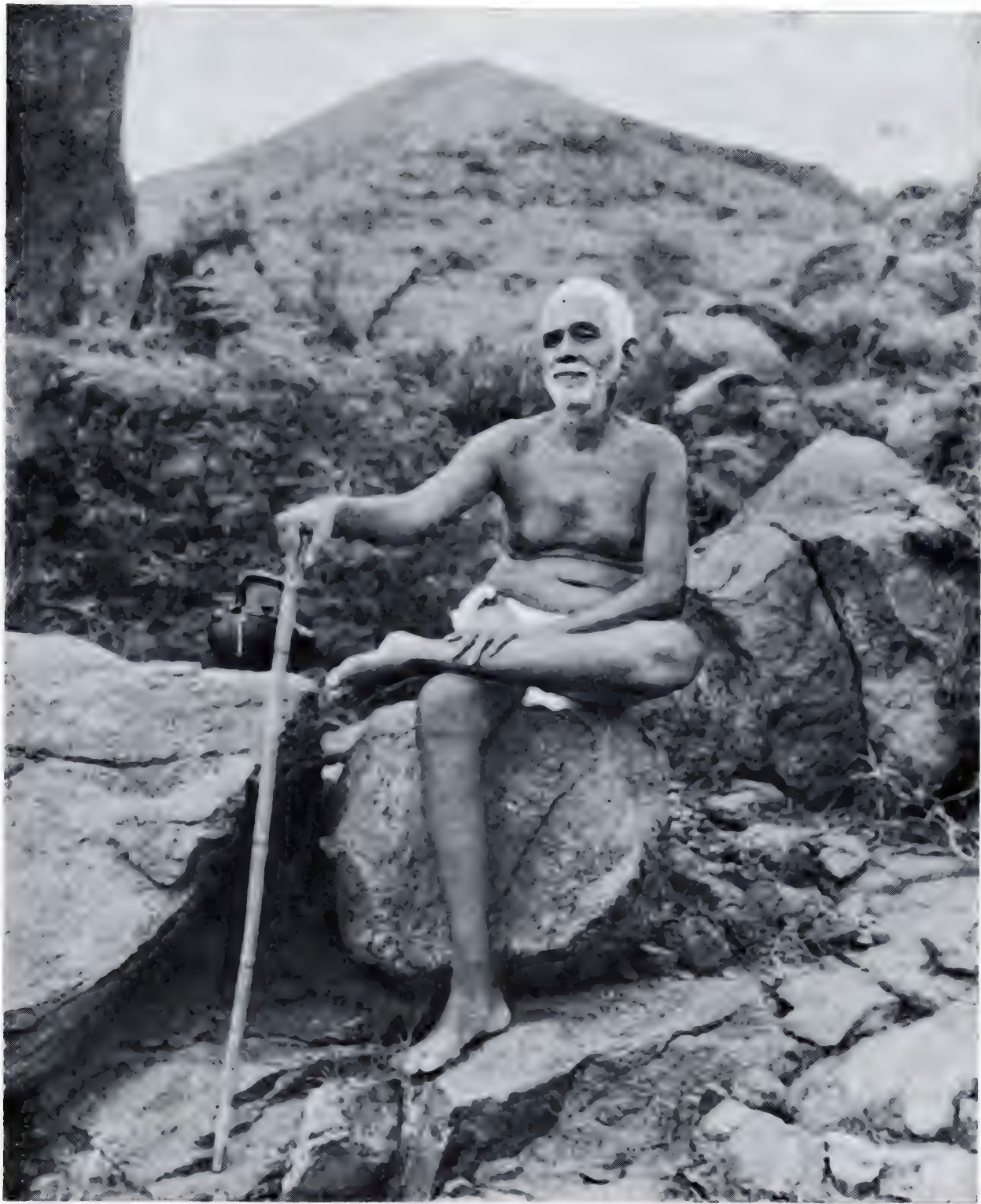
'Perceiving' is *subjectivity*.

The frequent statement that "see-er, see-ing, and seen are one",
or do-er, do-ing, and done, or any other such 'trilogy', is at the least
misleading.

There is no such 'trilogy', there is no 'one', for the present parti-
ciple '-ing' denotes Presence and excludes both do-er and deed, see-er
and seen.

As *relative* 'mind' I am whatever is perceived within the limits
of sensorial perceiving wherever and whenever perceiving occurs in
space-time.

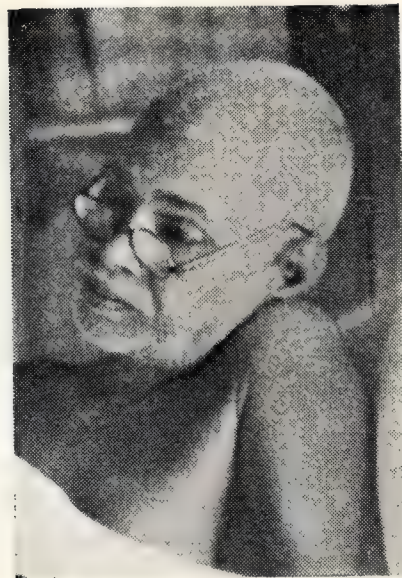
Absolutely I am the limitless Presence 'wherein' such perceiving
seems to occur.





How Bhagavan Learnt Malayalam

KUNJU SWAMI



MANY have often wondered at the facility with which Bhagavan spoke and wrote Malayalam, a language which was absolutely new to him when he came to Tiruvannamalai. Many natives of Kerala were taken aback on hearing him speak in faultless Malayalam. Yet his knowledge of that language was picked up in a most casual and unorthodox manner.

In his early days at Tiruvannamalai he was, as is well known, constantly waited upon by a sadhu named Palaniswami. This sadhu, whose mother tongue was Malayalam, was in the habit of reading every day from the Malayalam version of the *Adhyatma Ramayana* composed by Thunjath Ramanujan Ezhuthas-san, generally regarded as the father of Malayalam literature. This book is held in great veneration in Kerala; pious persons read a part of it every day before taking their food. Thus, Palaniswami never failed to read it before taking his food. He was at this time getting his food from a charity home in the town and partaking of it with Bhagavan and others who happened to be present. After bringing the food, he would sit down to read. But, as his knowledge of literary Malayalam was very poor, he used to take a very long time to read a passage. Bhagavan and the

others were thus forced to wait an inordinately long time for their food. Bhagavan would never mind the delay, but he felt concerned for the visitors when there were any. So, one day he asked Palaniswami whether there was any objection to someone else reading the book for him. Palaniswami had none. Upon this, Bhagavan, who did not know a single letter of the Malayalam alphabet, took up the book and asked Palaniswami to say what sound each letter stood for. He then discovered that most of the letters closely resembled the characters of the Tamil alphabet or the *Grantha* alphabet which he had learned at Madurai. He therefore said that it was easy for him to read Malayalam and, indeed, attained in the course of two or three days enough proficiency to read the *Ramayana* fluently.

Nor was his proficiency limited to reading. He mastered the language in no time to the astonishment of everyone. The *Adhyatma Ramayana* attracted him by the large number of passages of Advaitic import it contained. One particular passage which Bhagavan often used to read out was that in which Hanuman explains to Ravana the glory of devotion to Rama. This passage was quoted by

Bhagavan to Dandapani Swami when the latter asked him to give him some *upadesa*. It is well known that Bhagavan never gave special *upadesa* to any person. His life itself was an *upadesa* for those who had eyes to see. And, of course, his works like *Upadesa Saram* and *Ulladu Narpadu* convey his teachings. When, however, anybody importuned him for *upadesa*, he used to ask him what he was practising. If he was practising some kind of *sadhana*, he would ask him to continue it. If anybody said that he had no *sadhana*, Bhagavan would ask him which of the gods or goddesses he liked best. The devotee was bound to mention Krishna or Rama or Devi or some other deity. Bhagavan would then ask him to think of that god or goddess constantly. He never discouraged anybody or decried the beliefs and practices of others. Thus it was that Dandapani Swami who was a simple devotee of Rama was advised by Bhagavan to continue his devotion to Rama. Bhagavan also pointed out to him the glory of devotion to Rama and quoted in support the above passage.

Another Malayalam work which attracted Bhagavan was *Yoga Vasishtha*. He was so deeply moved by some passages in it that he could not often proceed with his reading. His identification with the characters was so complete that he forgot that he was reading a book.

As Bhagavan's proficiency in Malayalam increased, he began to write in that language. He rendered *Upadesa Saram* and *Ulladu Narpadu* into Malayalam verses. These verses were so perfect that even scholars hesitated before suggesting any change in them. I once took some of the Malayalam verses composed by Bhagavan to a well-known Malayalam professor for his opinion. The professor marvelled at the purity of diction achieved by a writer whose mother tongue was not Malayalam, but, after much hesitation, ventured to point to a few expressions here and there which he thought were not quite in accordance with Malayalam usage. On my return to the Ashram, I told Bhagavan about this, upon which he promptly took some Malayalam books like the *Adhyatma Ramayana* and pointed out passages which supported his usage.

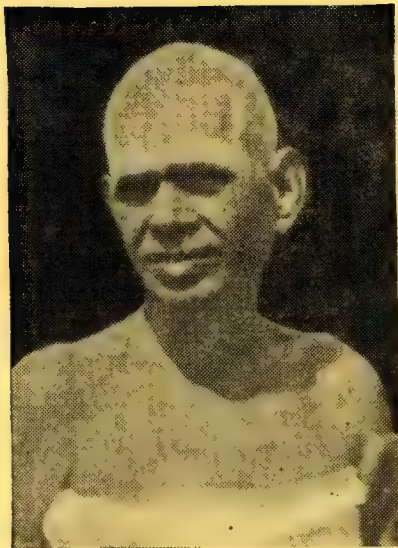
This is how Bhagavan used to master the contents of the books read by him. He would go through a book quickly, glancing here and there, and then put it down. But, if anybody wanted an explanation of any particular point in it, he was always ready with it. His memory was extraordinary. He would get a poem by heart after reading it once or twice. He used to say that he knew which stanza followed which by the sequence of sense. It is no wonder that he learned Malayalam so quickly and so thoroughly!

Know the "I"

.....
"Who"

"There is a profound truth in us, the Truth of ourself, the practical knowledge of which will make us free; but he that would be free, must seek and reverently question one that is himself free. (*Bhagavat Gita* IV—34.) That emphasises the need of resort to a Living Teacher of the Truth, if one such can be found.

The Knowledge that comes by the study of the sacred lore is of little value; one can learn more and more quickly, from the Silence of a living Teacher than he can gather by a life-time of the study of Books."



“He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to Him. **You have no longer any cares.** Each one is looked after by God. There is no need to let Him know your needs. He already knows them and will look after them.”

—*Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*



The Spanish lady, Madam Mercedes De Acorta, has written a letter to Mr. Hague, the American mining engineer who is here as a temporary resident for the last two months. She has raised a few questions there: "If the individual Self merges into the universal Self, how can one pray to God for the uplift of humanity?" The question seems to be common among the thinkers of the West.

Sri Bhagavan said: They pray to God and finish with "Thy Will be done!" If His Will be done why do they pray at all? It is true that the Divine Will prevails at all times and under all circumstances. The individuals cannot act of their own accord. Recognise the force of the Divine Will and keep quiet. Each one is looked after by God. He has created all. You are one among 2,000 millions. When He looks after so many will He omit you? Even common sense dictates that one should abide by His Will.

Again, there is no need to let Him know your needs. He knows them Himself and will look after them.

Still more, why do you pray? Because you are helpless yourself and you want the Higher Power to help you. Well, does not your Creator and Protector know your weakness? Should you parade your weakness in order to make Him know it?



D: But God helps those who help themselves.

M: Certainly. Help yourself and that is itself according to God's Will. Every action is prompted by Him only. As for prayer for the sake of others, it looks so unselfish on the surface of it. But analyse the feeling and you will detect selfishness there also. You desire others' happiness so that you may be happy. Or you want the credit for having

interceded on others' behalf. God does not require an intermediary. Mind your business and all will be well.

D: Does not God work His Will through some chosen person?

M: God is in all and works through all. But His presence is better recognised in purified minds. The pure ones reflect God's actions more clearly than the impure minds. Therefore

people say that they are the chosen ones. But the 'chosen' man does not himself say so. If he thinks that he is the Intermediary then it is clear that he retains his individuality and that there is no complete surrender.

Silence is the ocean in which all the rivers of all the religions discharge themselves. So says Thayumanavar. He also adds that the Vedic religion is the only one which combines both philosophy and religion.

भवजलनिधिं गाहं गाहं चिरादलसालसान्
पदजरुहद्वन्द्वद्वीपं श्रितांस्तव सम्प्रति ।
रमणभगवन् कल्याणानां निकेतन पाहि नः
सदय दयया सिक्तैर्मक्तानपाङ्गबिलौकितैः ॥

O Lord Ramana ! Thou art all that is beatific, whereas Thy devotees, thrown headlong into the ocean of unending births and deaths and sinking again and again at endlessly recurring intervals, are struggling in despair, and being thoroughly exhausted are reaching up to Thy two lotus-feet as the only haven in the ocean of *Samsara*, are clinging to them. Merciful Lord ! kindly turn Thy gracious glance towards Thy refugees and save them !

—KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI.



Ramana Jyothi

LUCY CORNELSEN

THE use of language is indispensable in matters of everyday life; it has been developed exactly for this purpose. However on a level higher than that, sensible persons fall back naturally into silence, because silence can be a far stronger means of expression than words. On higher levels, that means ascending from the basic plane of bodily necessities to the subtle experiences of our invisible nature, direct transmission — without words — can be more powerful than any amount of verbal eloquence.

This proves true much more still in the realm of the Spirit. Silence is actually *the language of the Spirit*. Spiritual teaching is not always 'talking'; on the contrary, the higher form is always the direct transmission of the Spirit, and the means of communication between Guru and disciple in this case is silence, not only of the lips, but of the mind as well.

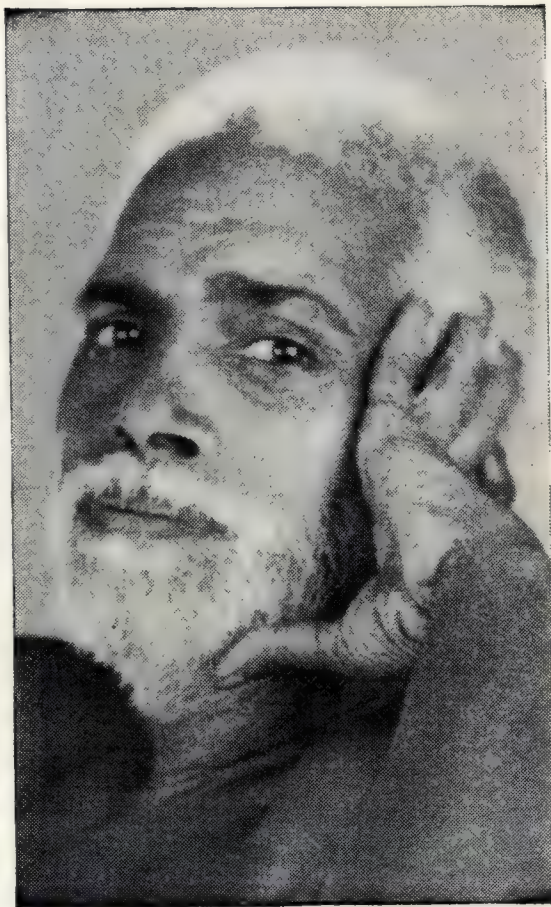
* * *

But then — what will happen to all our knowing and thinking? The reply was given by Sri Ramana Maharshi: 'There comes a day when we have to unlearn everything which we have learnt.'

This may be a hard saying to all those who cherish knowledge and book-learning, and there are many. It might be the most difficult lesson of all to learn: That the goal of spiritual life is *not* knowledge, not even 'becoming' something, but Being-pure, silent Being.

'All that is required to realize the Self is to Be Still. What can be easier than that?'

O Bhagavan, thy devotees are such that they need millions of words to reach that Stillness, and heaps of knowledge to grasp the meaning of that pure Being! There would be



little chance of success in their effort without the transmission of thy Jyothi: The secret of thy Silent Being!

* * *

And here there is a trap, which is not seen by many even of the best aspirants. Many devotees of Ramana Maharshi like to consider themselves to be pure Jnanis; actually they are Bhaktas too — Bhaktas of their Guru. That is no blame; on the contrary, it is a great aid in their sadhana. However their

bhakti has the tendency to put their beloved Bhagavan on a higher and always higher pedestal, thus sometimes creating a veritable idol out of him. That means, they increase more and more the distance between him and themselves. However the greatest of all the great features about Ramana Maharshi is perhaps the fact that he was a *human being*. This most important fact should not be lost sight of. The Truth of the real Nature of man revealed itself in him during his being a man himself, and not by book-learning, nor even by sadhana. The traditional view of Hindus — that his knowledge and sadhana had been completed in previous births — may be correct or not. At any rate he was a nice and naughty boy when the mystic

secret of the perfect Man revealed itself to him !

And when people later on named the nameless Brahmin of the Hill, Ramana, he still was a human being. This is further emphasized by the fact that this body had to pay its full and heavy tax to human life in the shape of severe suffering.

Only if it is kept in mind that Ramana Maharshi was a human being like you and me, who discovered and after that embodied the truth of the Real Man — only then others have a chance too, to reach the same Goal, and only then the Holy Scriptures do not lie.

Ramana Jyothi ? — May that Light reveal for ever and ever the Silent Being of Ramana, the Perfect Man.

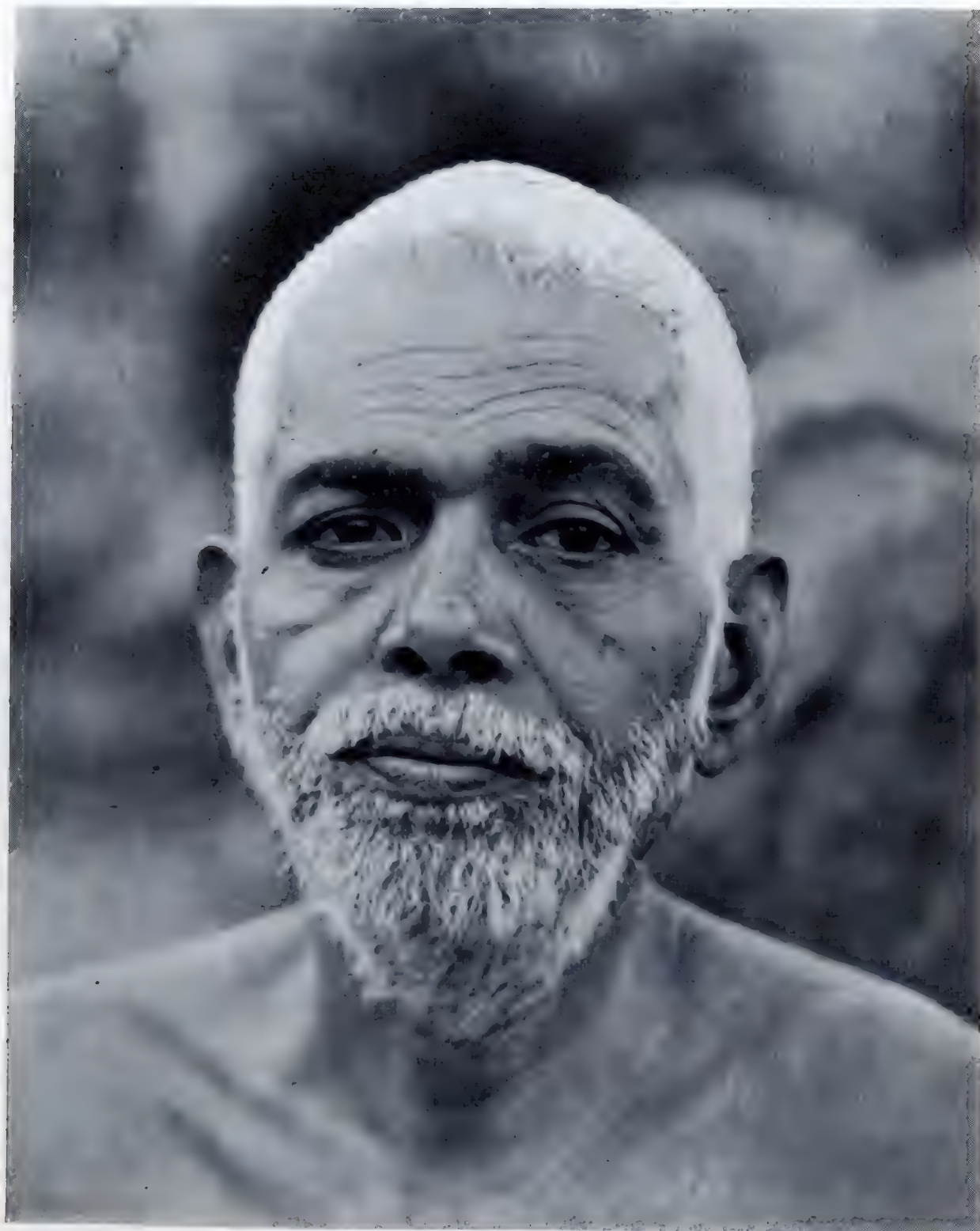
Above and Below

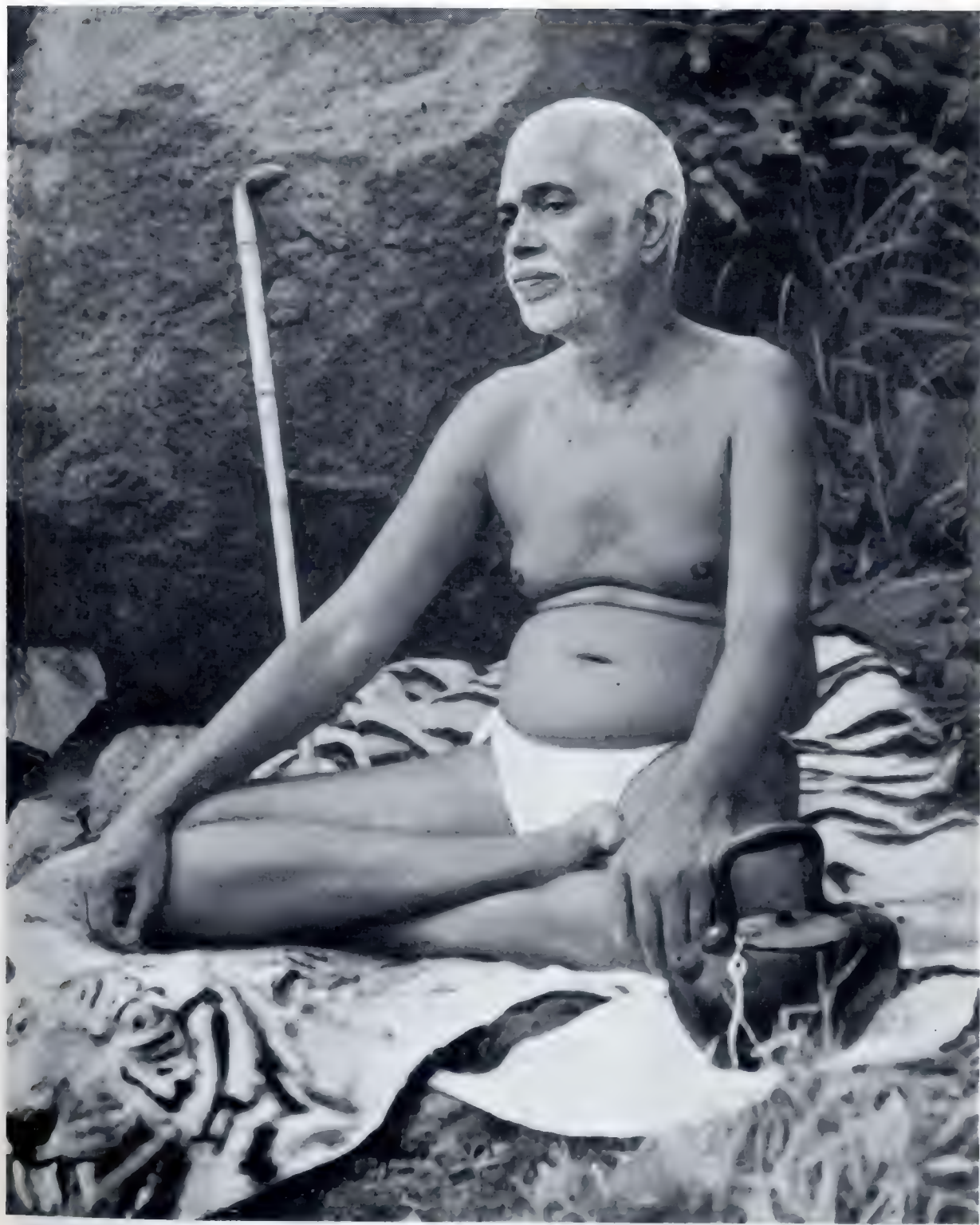
.....

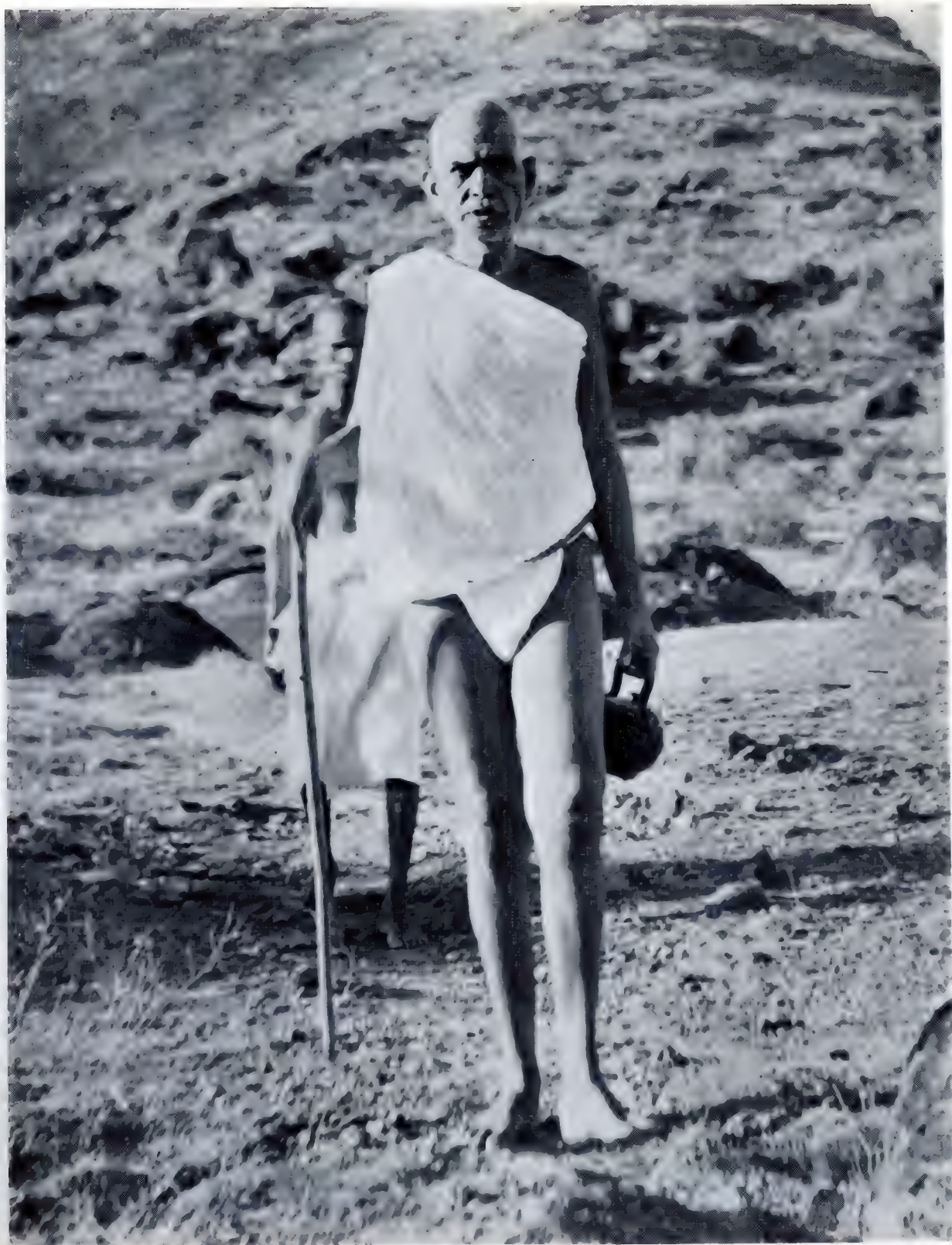
When Bhagavan was living on the hill-side, some sadhus used to visit him. While most of them felt they were superior to the householder devotees, one sadhu whom we shall call X regarded himself as superior to the rest and almost equal to Bhagavan.

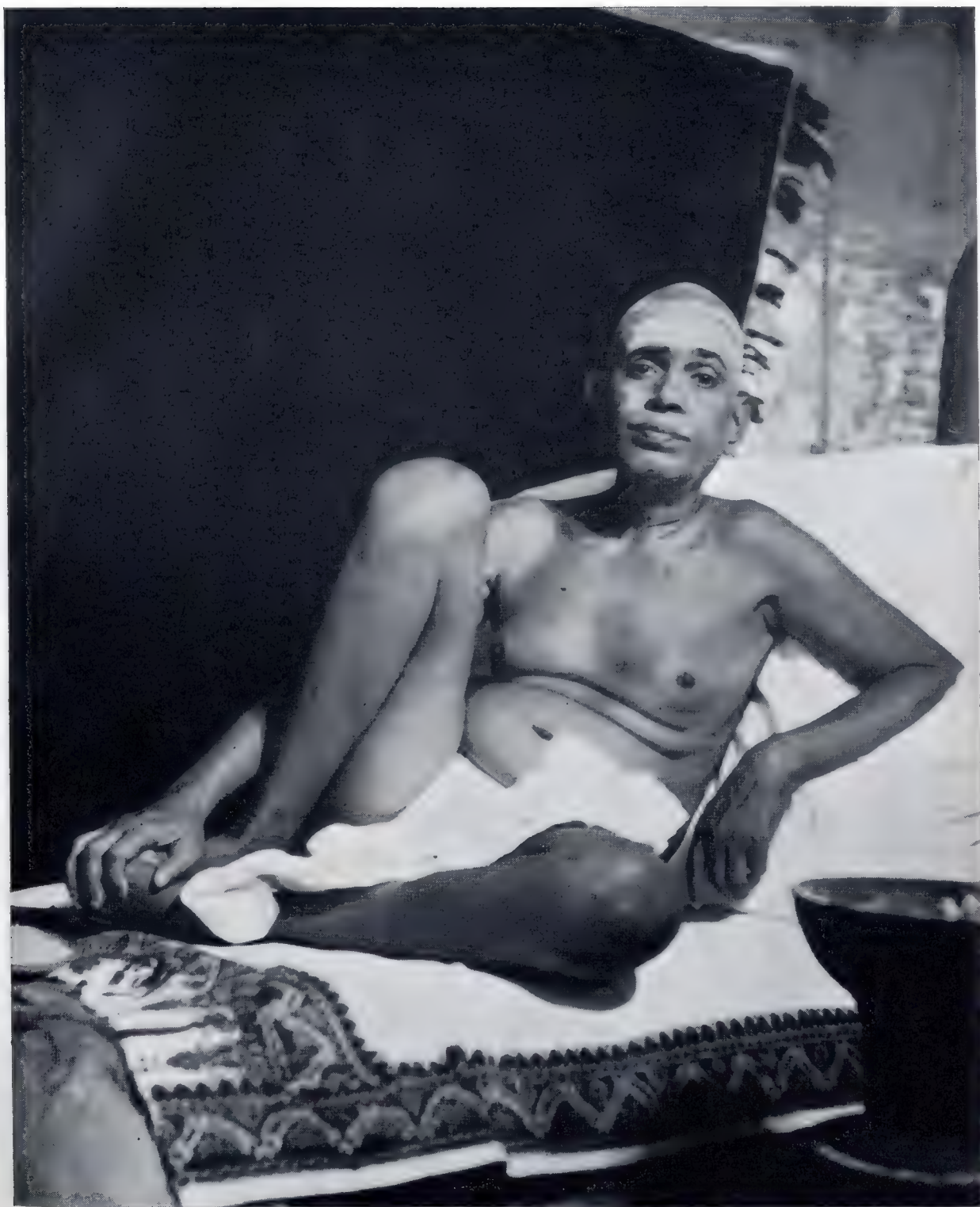
X's constant efforts to occupy a seat not much lower than Bhagavan's used to evoke caustic comments. One day as Bhagavan was seated on a boulder near Virupakshi cave, X approached the company and, finding no elevated seat and unwilling to sit on the ground, walked away in a hurry. As a titter ran round the group of sadhus, Bhagavan remarked, "You have honoured me with the highest available seat and duly driven X away. But what about this fellow here ?"

So saying, he pointed his finger upward at a monkey proudly perched on a branch above his head !



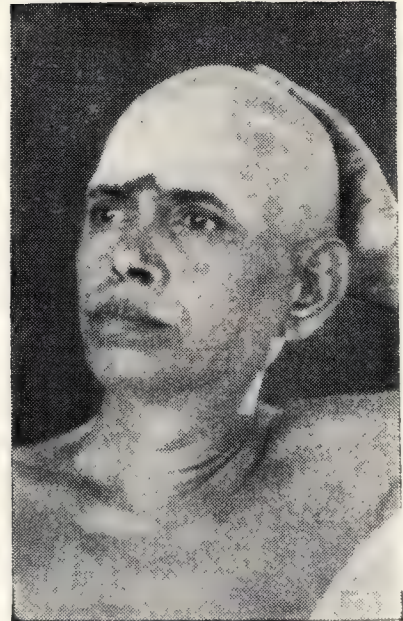






Meditation Hall and Meditation

S. S. COHEN



OLD devotees of Sri Ramana congratulate themselves on being able to witness during recent years the steady growth of the Ashram and its activities. After the stormy events of the first decade following the Mahanirvana of the Master, calm has prevailed and a new order has been established. This has resulted in the building and consecration of the beautiful small shrine over Sri Bhagavan's samadhi, the publication of the now-celebrated quarterly *The Mountain Path*, the lengthening list of old and new books published and now "the commencement of the construction of a HUGE Meditation Hall" contiguous to the samadhi. It is understood that the present hall¹ which has been hallowed by the Master's presence for a quarter of a century will continue to serve those who may wish to meditate in it. The Ashram authorities are fully justified in providing for future contingencies and building a more spacious hall to serve both as an auditorium and a place of meditation.

With the same perspective in view the next effort will — funds permitting — be the extension of the accommodation within and without the Ashram compound to relieve the

occasional room congestion which is being felt by the new arrivals whose numbers are steadily growing. It must be said for the authorities that they have been scrupulously following Sri Bhagavan's idea of making the guests who hail from distant lands feel at home in the matter of the twin necessities of food and shelter. These devotees are not flitting tourists but potential residents for comparatively long periods. Some of them have been here for years.

The foremost objective which draws foreign devotees to this Ashram is the application of Sri Bhagavan's teaching in their lives and their *sadhana* (discipline), which means simple living and meditation. To stay in Tiruvannamalai without meditation is to deny oneself the sweetest fruit of one's opportunity. Bhagavan tells us that meditation is the repository of all the virtues which a seeker needs to cultivate in order to attain his highest ideal, peace and inner freedom, devotion (*bhakti*), knowledge (*jnana*), service (*karma*), love, surrender, and finally, the total

¹ The OLD HALL is being kept up as it was in the days of Sri Bhagavan. It will, even hereafter, be exclusively used only for meditation.

merging into the Lord who shines in the hearts of all as Consciousness and Bliss.

Whatever Bhagavan said and wrote had a pointed bearing on meditation. "Enquire and you will find, meditate and you will arrive" is the import of his teachings. As all thoughts rise from the heart (or Consciousness) so all properly conducted enquiry eventually ends in the heart. It cannot go amiss. The Master's ideas have to be thoroughly understood and assimilated to give the right direction to the *vichara* (enquiry) and meditation. Half knowledge and half illusion will produce garbled results. Mastered knowledge is marked by determined persistence and unshakable confidence.

It cannot be denied that the beginnings are difficult, as all beginnings are. The practicant who grows quickly despondent, will land back again in the material world to which his heart and his restless mind incline. But as the *vichara* goes on in right earnest, day after day and month after month, the value of the objects as real entities will gradually diminish causing a corresponding diminution in the attachment to them. Mental quiescence will follow the periods of concentration.

The aim of the *vichara* (enquiry) is to expose the fictitious nature of the objects, and then to dive deeper to their substratum, the Self, the true 'I' of the enquirer. Objects in themselves have neither the substance, the qualities, nor the stability which we ascribe to them. Being mere thoughts they flit for a second or two and disappear. What gives them the semblance of solidity, continuity, and permanence are the faculties of the mind that perceives them — the senses and, most of all, that cementing faculty which is called memory. Let memory withdraw and the cementing force will disintegrate, bringing down all the connecting links which give significance and coherence to the material as well as the psychical world. Cause and effect; past and future; 'I' and 'mine'; birth, growth and death; all human relationships; all natural laws will cease to exist: they will crumble to

dust. Even knowledge, which depends on the memory to be retained, and motion, which is the memory of a series of positions in a series of instants will be no more. The objects will then assume different appearances in a world which has come to a complete standstill and of which nothing has remained but the fugitive instant, isolated from its predecessor and successor.

What attachment can a man of a mature *vichara* conceive for such a ghost-like, vaporous world?

While the enquiry into the objects permits us to understand the nature of illusion, the study of the effects of the memory on meditation will permit us to guard against them. In meditation the memory becomes so highly active as to oppose all attempts at concentration. The body and the memory are the greatest enemies of the *sadhana* — the body because of its needs, its habits, its longings, its human and non-human ties, its health and diseases, and the memory because of a life rich in experience. They continue to pop up during and in between the meditations and disturb us.

Yet relentless practice over the years will eventually grind down all oppositions. The extroverted tendencies will gradually be replaced by the introverted ones till the source of all things, the Self, is reached. The spiritual current which is generated by the steady meditation is far more powerful than the unstable, unsubstantial thoughts and sweeps them out of existence as the midday sun sweeps away the heavy mist from the surface of the sea. This current will reveal the radiant consciousness which underlies thoughts and which will no more be befogged by them.

On the other hand there are the fortunate ones who feel at home with meditation right from the beginning. They start with a mind which has already attained an appreciable degree of detachment from the glamour of sense perceptions, a mind already bent inward. These take to meditation as ducks to water

and cannot give it up. It is they that seek the shelter of an Ashram to give free play to their inner urge, in solitude and close to the Guru, whose Presence they feel in his old earthly abode.

In the half century of its existence, during and after the Master's lifetime, Sri Ramanasramam has harboured a number of such aspirants who lived in it for years, made fervent

efforts, AND ARRIVED. They are standing witnesses to the truth of the Master's teaching; they offer encouragement to those who are ready to follow in their footsteps. The Supreme GOAL is easy of access to the pilgrims who tread the path — without luggage. Over the entrance to the Path an ancient inscription in gold letters reads: "Walk on. Halt not. The Goal is in sight."

Ramana: The Light of Knowledge

G. L. N.

RAMANA is the embodiment of Arunachala, the beacon light of knowledge. His rays which are both light and knowledge permeate the world phenomenon and enable us to cognise the reality beneath names and forms. He is the cause of the appearance and disappearance of the world but He remains whole and ever without any limitations. He is the One with many attributes. He is the Self of our 'selves', the existence — knowledge — bliss of the *atman*.

To dispel the *samsara* illusion the method taught by him is enquiry into the Self. All his works are brief and I will refer here only to one of them, the *Atma Vidya* song. The entire vedanta is compressed within its five stanzas. Each stanza deals with a particular aspect of the vision of the Atman.

Sri Ramana teaches in the song that the sole cause of suffering is the erroneous notion that the body and the world are real. This

thought has to be rooted out completely. All thoughts are centred round the I-thought (ego), attaching itself to the body. By enquiring within who this 'I' is and from where it arises, all thoughts disappear in the self-effulgent *atman*. Without knowing the Self, whatever else is known is useless. If the Self is known, what more is there to know? The Self is the one thing which shines unchanged in all *jivas*. One has only to remain quiet, without the least action of mind or body and Lo!, the blaze of the light of *atman* is experienced. The *atman* shining in the mind, which is turned inward and searches its source, is verily Arunachala. For this blissful realization, Grace on His part and devotion on ours are necessary.

The method of Self-enquiry is direct, universal and easy. It is easy in that the cessation of all activity is prescribed, but it is difficult in that it has to be pursued incessantly till the separate ego is lost in the oneness of Self. This is the natural (*sahaja*) state where the real, cosmic 'I' shines in the heart with perennial *sphurana* as "I-I".

It is for destroying the ignorance of ego and realizing the natural state that the several paths of *japa*, *yoga*, *bhakti*, *karma* and *jnana* are taught. Sri Ramana says that *jnana* is the crown of all paths. The light of Sri Ramana is ever present and ever guiding. May His Grace bless all seekers and help them to realize the beatitude of the *sahaja* state!

Blessed Gift of Peace

JEANNE GUERINEAU

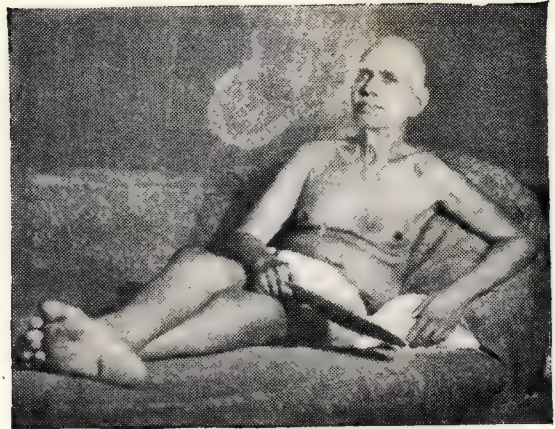
I AM thrilled to have this opportunity of saying a few words in remembrance of our revered Master, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

Life offers an immense field of experiences and trials, of joys and pains, to fervent seekers for Truth as to all beings. From childhood onwards it leads them, step by step, slowly, through various paths; some dark or thorny, others bright or smooth, collectively or alone. The sources of interest are multiple and the desires numberless. Everyone wants to live, to put to proof, to love and be loved, to search, to know, to understand, to discover, to create, to assert oneself, to dominate, to possess, to be happy.

In our dualistic world, where all is relative and many things oppose each other, but where each has its purpose, how many efforts are made for egoistic ends, how many sufferings are repeated, how many uglinesses are accumulated, and how few are the high accomplishments realized !

However, the outside conquests, no matter how great, leave us ever unsatisfied, as something is always missing. Where then is Truth ? Where to find the answer to our inborn need for the Absolute, for Perfection, for Peace and Happiness ?

From age to age, Great Sages have come and they are still coming to show us the way, leading through inner conquest, to True Knowledge. Among those, at the Hour of



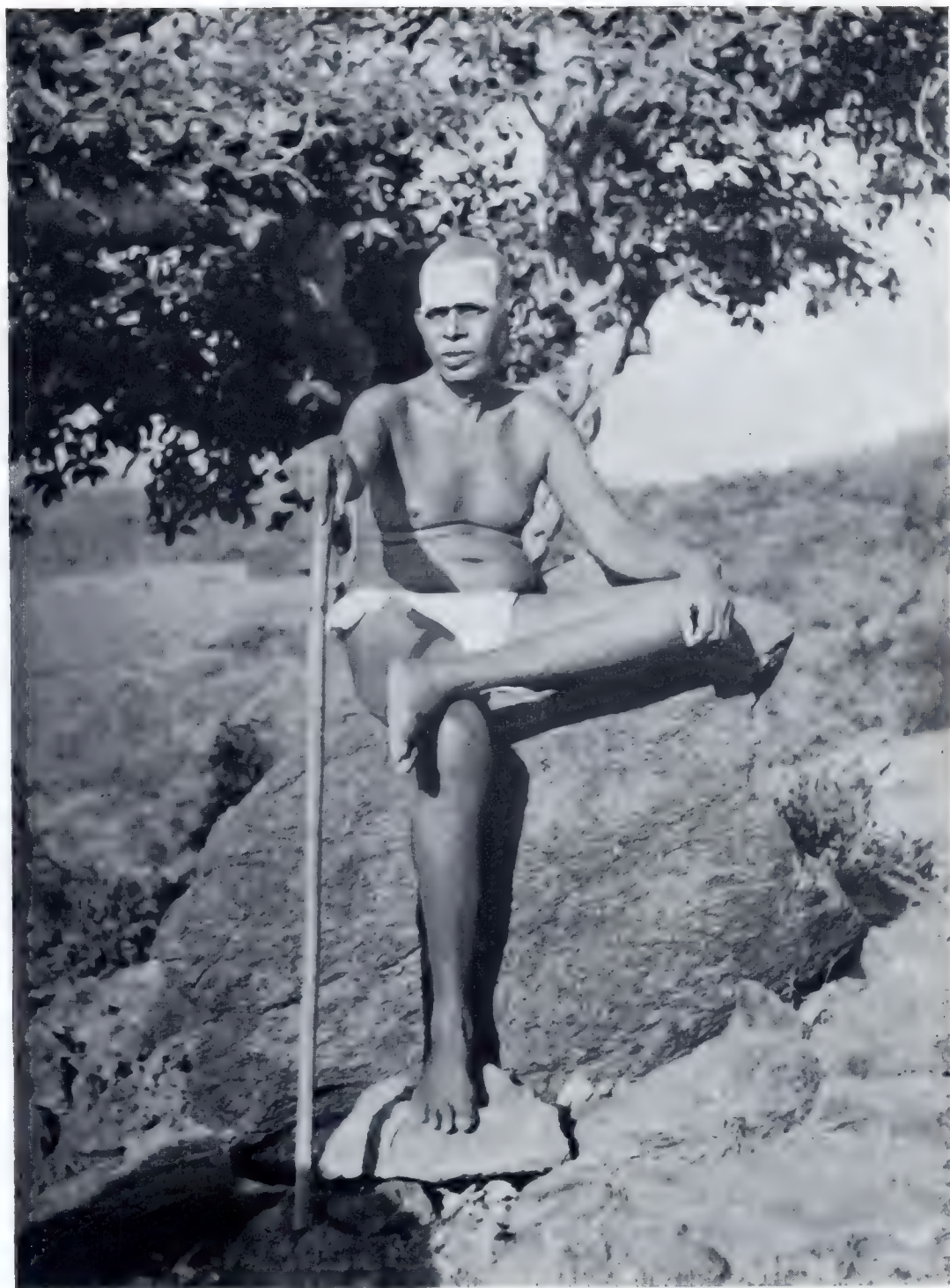
Aquarius, the Great Sage of Arunachala revived, in his own way, the Message of Peace and Love of the Crucified Divine. He is for us a living witness, the incarnation itself of Truth. He is the Father made manifest again. Blessed are those who could sit at his feet and could meet his gaze shining with Divine Light.

Blessed are those who could stay in his Presence and receive his precious Teaching.

Blessed are the fervent pilgrims who, young or old, have had or will have the privilege to follow the stages of his life, at the same time so utterly simple and infinitely rich, from his little room at his uncle's place in Madurai where, for the first time, he reached the Absolute Consciousness, and whence he stole away at the age of 16 to answer the call of his Father, Arunachala, the Great Temple of Tiruvannamalai, the Sacred Hill and Its caves, where he remained in silence for 26 years ; to Palitirtham at the foot of the Hill, where for 28 years, he showered on everyone the Blessed gift of Peace by His mere Presence !

Blessed are those who have dedicated themselves to Sri Ramanasramam and who faithfully and vigilantly preserve his teachings for the benefit of all mankind !

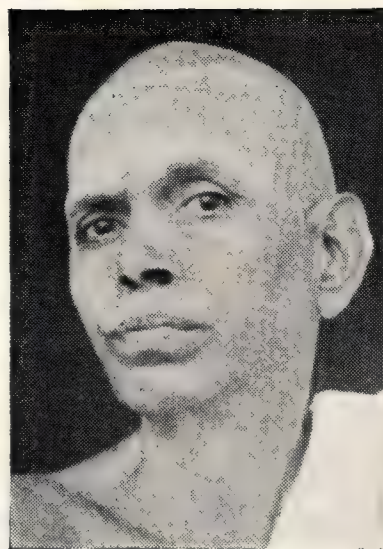
Blessed are those who know and follow Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, all resplendent with Purity, Peace and Love, whose Grace carries us beyond our little selves towards the Light which is our true Being !





Why I Choose Ramana Maharshi

.....
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI



BECAUSE I want True Silence, I want perfect peace which I find nowhere else.

I know full well that this will never be achieved by my own personal efforts, however earnest they may be. I do need the guidance and grace of a Perfect Master, One who has seen the land where there is neither sun nor moon, who has seen the light which makes them shine, who is absolutely free and fearless. I have full faith that Bhagavan Ramana is such a Master. He is within us all reigning as the supreme Inner Guru, the Self. I feel that He beckons us all towards Him day in and day out.

Besides I do not want a zigzag, round-about path to Reality. I do not want to tarry and linger. I want a direct path, a path which is the surest and the shortest, a path that is itself the goal. I am sure that Maharshi's path is such. There is no dependence here on any other agency. If at all there is any dependence, it is Self-dependence. I choose Maharshi because He teaches not so much by word as by Silence — Silence which, though ruling over Time and Space, is beyond Time and Space. His teaching and his influence are very subtle and very deep. They spring from His own unique experience. Though its core is the same as the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, his teaching is far more fresh and living. It is the plane where all religions must meet. It is simple and natural as awareness, the pure "I AM", with no fuss of 'doing this

and that'. He says simply 'Be' and puts His fingers on the heart of the mystery, the one thing needful. He knows the subtle working of our ego. He does not ask us to follow Him or go to His Ashram but exhorts us to go to our own Self, to visit the shrine within each one of us.

'Go within. Enquire within. Arunachala is within'. It is impossible to separate Ramana from Arunachala. They are one like Shakti and Siva. Though they are related as son and Father, the son and the Father are one, as Jesus said.

When the dark cloud of ego shrouds me, I call on Ramana and 'He comes, He comes, He ever comes'.

When maya puts her veils over me and the world, I remember Ramana and pray to Him. And 'He comes, He comes, He ever comes'.

When the night is dark around me, I look for His light and like the sun dispelling all at once, 'He comes, He comes, He ever comes'.

I love Bhagavan Ramana above all because He is the life of my life, the breath of my breath, the hope of my hope. But for him, life would be a mere burden, a mechanical movement of the wheel of karma.

I choose Bhagavan Ramana most of all because He has chosen me!

To write on Bhagavan : the mind repeats these simple words and is at once flooded with emotion made of light. The heart of the devotee is always full. Again and again it is bathed in tears that come from he knows not where ; the lachrymation acquires a "life of its own" one would think.

To write on Bhagavan : the heart trembles a little this time at what it fears to be an impossibility. How can one write about God : Being as such, He who is, having nothing to do with attributes and the words which can describe them. When this task has time and again proved fruitless even to the academician who can remain at a distance from his subject and let his intellect guide him, what can the poor devotee do who knows

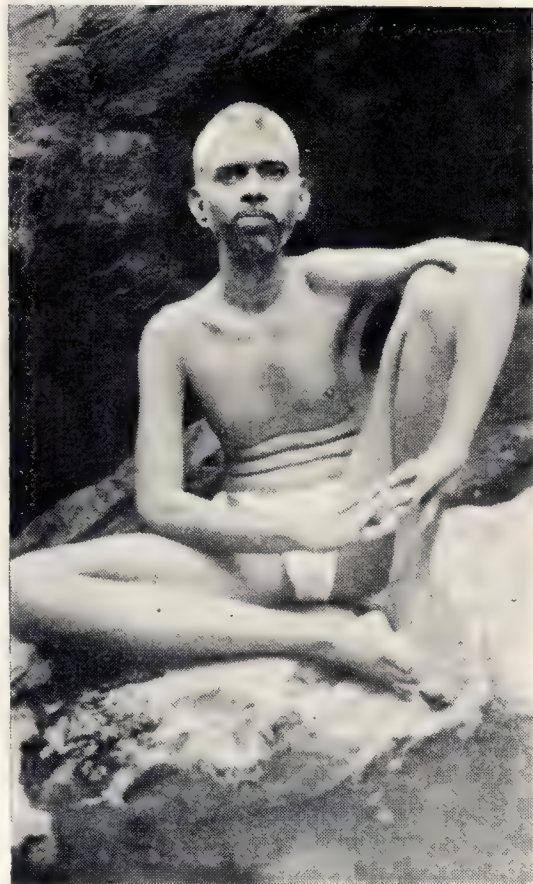
by doing it, by listening, and probably in no other way. We have to remember — at every moment. This is the one true freedom that we all have Bhagavan tells us. When we remember, we can turn the will again and again and still again — yet always gently, kindly, if possible humbly — to the task in hand. The job is not a burden ; it is its own reward,

BHAGAVAN IS

Mrs. BARBARA ROSE

he cannot be guided either by his intellect or his emotions alone. How to write ?

But "*the guidance of Bhagavan*" : there we have a subject about which each devotee could write a volume if he so chose ! To begin with : it is there. This is a fact which can cause enough happiness to change the course of the stars in the skies. However that doesn't need changing, so the devotee can just let it change him instead. And next : what always strikes me most about Bhagavan's guidance is that (contrary to expectations) it is *not* subtle, it does not display itself only with regard to "deep inner matters". In fact, if one "listens", if one lets, he will be "docile" to Him ; on *every* issue will he be told how to think, feel and then act. How to learn this ? The will learns how to "listen"



for with remembering comes the quiet awareness of "who" is at work. Just a little practice of this gives a greater security than anything that could be imagined by a million minds in a million years, the "self-validating", i.e., absolute certainty of direct experience.

At first the listening is with a beginner's enthusiasm, then with the determination a habit brings, and finally with love. Yes, we

listen when we love. This is the very law of things. Even the most deep-bedded opposition from the "department of *vasanas*" cannot hold out before love of Bhagavan. It cannot be better said than in these words of St. John of the Cross :

The soul lives by that which it loves rather than in the body which it animates. For it has not its life in the body, but rather gives it to the body and lives in that which it loves.

Let me finish by congratulating my fellow-devotees on the event which this Souvenir commemorates. For us the good news is still and always that *Bhagavan is ours* — ours in the very realest sense possible, in the sense that our self, our life, our consciousness are ours. I pray for us, I pray for us that we may through the power which He gives us continually grow more and more able to open ourselves to the simple timeless awareness which is His Love and Grace.



Prayer to Arunachala

.....
SRI MAHARSHI

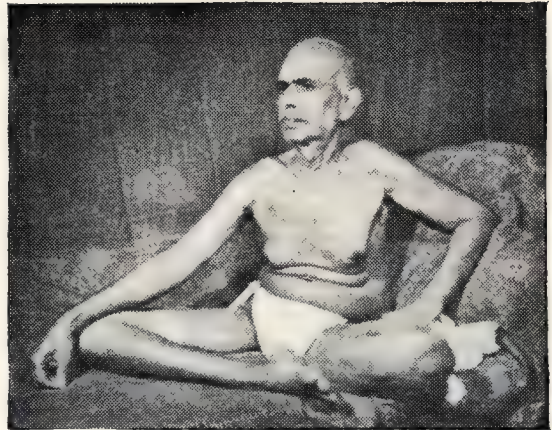
To search for God, ignoring You
Who stand and shine,
Is to go, lamp in hand, in search
Of darkness.
As Being and Awareness You —
And You alone —
Stand and shine
In various forms in various faiths.
Blind to the sun are they who fail
To see You yonder,
Standing bright.
Within my own Self
Stay and shine,
O Arunachala,
Peerless jewel of my heart.

Like a thread that holds together
In a necklace many gems,
You are the Life in all that lives,
The One God of every creed.
When on the grindstone of Pure Mind
My mind is polished free of flaws,
It can reflect your grace alone
And nothing else.
The sun's light having fallen once
On a sensitive plate, it cannot take
Another picture. Hill of brightness,
Where if not in You is Truth ?

— *Arunachala Ashtakam*, Verses IV & V

SILENCE

SURI NAGAMMA



BHAGAVAN always gives prominence to *mauna* — silence. That is why, several devotees regard him as an avatar of Sri Dakshinamurti. “*Gurostu maunam vyakhyanam ; sishyastu chhinna samsayah*”, so goes the saying ; when highly developed devotees come to Bhagavan for guidance they get their doubts automatically cleared by merely sitting in Bhagavan’s presence.

In 1947, some devotees casually mentioned that representatives of an international radio company had come to record Bhagavan’s voice. With a smile, Bhagavan said, “Oh ! Silence is my habit. Silence is uninterrupted speech. How could they record it ? What IS, is silence. How can anyone record that silence !” After saying that, he resumed silence. Those who could see his radiant face at that time were really fortunate ; for the lustre that shone out of his eyes at that time was so powerful that developed souls, who had the ability to absorb it, got their ignorance annihilated.

Subsequently, someone who was sitting in the hall enquired, “Bhagavan always gives great prominence to *mauna*. Does it mean that speech has no value ?”

Bhagavan : Speech is the great grandson of *mauna*. That being so, how could speech have the same value as *mauna* ?

Questioner : What exactly is the meaning of saying great grandson ?

Bhagavan : It is like this. Some flash of light must come out of the *Antaratma* ; that must assume the shape of *samkalpa* ; and it is only after that that it could assume the shape of a word. Has not that word thus become a creature of the fourth generation — a great grandson ?”

Though Bhagavan gave great prominence to *mauna*, he did extend his abundant grace to ordinary people, by imparting his teachings by word of mouth also. This is how he did it. “If one were to enquire who is that hears, eats or sees things, one inevitably gets the reply, “I”, “I”. If one turns one’s mind inward, searches and tries to find out who that “I” is, one realizes that is one’s own self ; the self is omnipresent and omnipotent. This enquiry is very easy.” This teaching used to please and satisfy all people alike — the theists and the atheists, the religious bigots and the ordinary men.

Once an atheist came to Bhagavan and said, “Swami, where is He who is called God ? So far as I am concerned, He is non-existent.” Bhagavan looked at him with sympathy and said, “All right. Let us suppose there is no God whatsoever. You are in existence. Aren’t you ?”

Questioner : Yes, I am in existence. How could it be otherwise? Yes, I am.

Bhagavan : Yes, that is enough. You have said that "you" do exist. Who exactly is that "you"? Where are "you"? Where do "you" end up ultimately? First enquire about that.

Questioner : What about God then?

Bhagavan : Why do you worry about God? Whether He is existent or non-existent, you are sure that "you" are existent. Find

out the origin of your Self. If you seek and find out your Self, we will see if the question about God arises thereafter.

The questioner had nothing more to say.

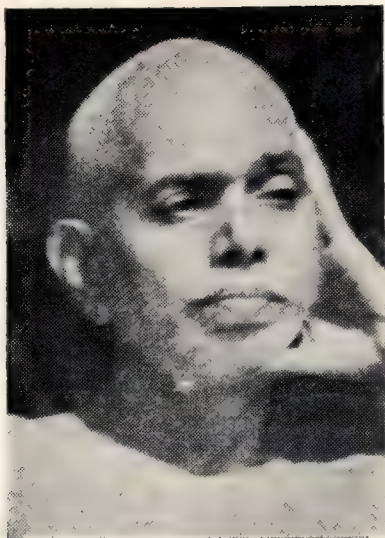
At times, when people of different religions came and praised their own religious heads, he used to tell them : "That which Is, is only one. Some call it Shakti, some Siva, some Vishnu, some Jesus and some Allah. People give it whatsoever names they like. What does it matter if the names they give are different? That, which Is, is only One."

The Shock

MURUGANAR

Look at him, the cheat.
See what he has done.
At his loving call I came,
Praying, "Sage of bliss
Whose might destroys all evil,
Refresh me, make me whole,
Like the sweet, cool Ganga waters
Which loved, revived and saved
The sons of Sagar scattered
As ashes in the abyss."
To my dismay, he opened
His eyes, a fire ablaze
Upon a massive rock,
And burnt to nought
My mortal self.





Ramana, Synonym for Grace

.....
G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

BHAGAVAN Ramana Maharshi used to say that Grace (*arul*, *anugraha*) is not a mere quality of the Supreme Self, the Transcendental Absolute, but another name, a synonym. This applies equally to Bhagavan Himself. As the life-giving light is to the Sun, so grace is to Bhagavan. It is manifest not only in His verbal 'Upadesa', but in His very look and person, nay in His Presence itself. All those who had the good fortune of entering into His presence testify in one voice to their instant experience of peace and solace. Bhagavan's silent poise is more eloquent and impressive than His speech. Bhagavan's Grace extends even beyond His physical presence. The mere thought or remembrance of Bhagavan is enough for one to feel the thrill of His Grace. Once, Bhagavan read out the letter of an American lady-devotee who had never seen Bhagavan, in which she described how the mere thought of Bhagavan would transport her mind into ecstasy for hours together; and Bhagavan observed that she was a greater devotee than many of us who sat around Him in the Hall.

Nay, Bhagavan's Grace transcends the mental plane, too. Strictly speaking, even the thought or remembrance of Him is not necessary for the functioning of His Grace. It always surrounds us like the atmosphere,

generates good thoughts in us, and stimulates our good impulses. If we are able to think well, to concentrate and meditate, to do any good work, nay, if we are able to breathe and live, it is entirely due to the Grace of Bhagavan. Even the thought of contributing an article to "RAMANA JYOTHI", the choice of the theme and this very writing are, in fact, due to Bhagavan's Grace. The project of Sri Ramana Auditorium, like all the previous, sacred projects of Sri Ramanasramam, is certainly owing to Bhagavan's Grace. If, still, we go wrong in thought and deed, it is despite Bhagavan's Grace, and due to the perversity of our ego.

It should be, however, noted that Bhagavan's Grace functions not by an act of His will, but naturally and spontaneously, as rays of light emanate from the Sun. Bhagavan says: "The Jnāni (Realised Soul) has no will. He does nothing Himself. He merely IS. When something comes into His Cosmic Consciousness, a Divine, automatic activity starts at once, and it does what is needed. The Jnāni is like the Sun who merely *shines*, while all life's operations go on, under his warm light."

Bhagavan has also given the warning that His Grace does not block or obstruct the course of dharma, that is, Nature's Law. It

does not prevent the inevitable mishaps and disasters of mortal life. But, it surely gives all mortals the strength of mind, the fortitude to bear the slings and arrows of fortune with equanimity and unruffled peace of mind. In short, the Grace of Bhagavan by turning man's look inward, by illumining his mind and by initiating and sustaining his spiritual *sādhana*, enables him to annihilate the ego and realize

the true Self. It thus lifts up the mortal being to the Immortal plane of Cosmic Consciousness. In popular parlance, the Grace of Bhagavan does finally transform man into God.

May Bhagavan's Grace bring about the speedy fulfilment of the present project and fill the Auditorium for the benefit of endless generations of *sādhakas*.

The Immutable State

.....

SANKARA

The immutable state of Liberation is one's own True nature. Liberation is not to be achieved by anything else than Knowledge of the Unity of Brahman and Atman. Wealth, or Actions made possible by wealth, cannot produce the yearning for Liberation. In order to obtain liberation one must heroically renounce the very desires for the pleasures of this world. Then one must seek the perfect Guru who is the embodiment of Peace and concentrate one's mind ceaselessly on that into which one is initiated. Such meditation leads to abidance in the Wisdom of the experience obtained.

"Actions are prescribed only for the purification of the Mind. Knowledge of the truth of the Self is obtained only by Self Enquiry and not by any number of Actions. One who mistakes a rope for a serpent is cast into Fear ; and his fear and distress can be removed, only by the Knowledge that it is a rope. A friend who knows this, tells him so, and he *investigates* and finds that it is so. Similarly Knowledge of the Brahman is obtained through the initiation of the Guru and Enquiry into Truth. He who seeks Liberation through the knowledge of the Self, must Enquire into the Self."

— From *Vivekachudamani*.

Help From Above

Justice K. S. VENKATARAMAN



MOST of us are unhappy most of the time. The little happiness that we think we enjoy is shortlived and superficial. Our desires and ambitions remain for ever unfulfilled. Often we feel frustrated or depressed. We naturally enquire whether there is no way out. We soon discover that there must be a Higher Power ruling this world and that if eternal happiness is at all possible it can only be by putting ourselves in tune with that Higher Power. Obviously, the Higher Power is infinite and man with his finite capacity cannot attune himself to the Infinite without the help of the Infinite.

Fortunately for us, in this country, the problem has been solved by seers long ago and even in modern times. All of them speak with one voice and assure us that the Higher Power is prepared to help us if we search for it within ourselves. Only the veil of ignorance must be removed and we must realize that we are not merely made up of this finite body and mind, but there is something higher which we may call spiritual within ourselves. We may accept this theory as a matter of faith to start with, but the difficulty lies in realizing this truth ourselves.

Before proceeding to describe my own limited experience, I set out briefly the main

systems which have been taught to us. One system would require the aspirant not to assume anything but be merely alive to the problem and be just a witness to the solution of the problem as it is gradually revealed by the Higher Power. This, in fact, is the ideal to be achieved. But this may not be easy to practise for the beginner and hence a simpler method has been suggested by our tradition, namely, to personify the Higher Power as a God and chant His name or think of some form attributed to Him. The founders of this method had all reached the goal and they simplified the method of approach for the benefit of the beginner, knowing that the practice of the simple method would in due course lead to the ultimate goal. A follower of this traditional method for more than 25 years, I have now come to a stage when it is not necessary and may even be impossible to utter any name or think of any form, for the Higher Power has no name or form. Bhagavan's approval and encouragement of the traditional method, which might otherwise appear irrational, gives us the assurance that this is one effective method of annihilating our finite mind and allowing the Higher Power to reveal itself.

तद्भागधेयमसमानमनेकमौनि-
वासार्जिनं क्षितिभृतः खलु लोहितस्य ।
अङ्गीचकार भगवान् रमणो महर्षि-
रन्येषु सत्सु यद्विमं बहुषु स्थलेषु ॥

Good luck accumulated to the Red Mount, Arunachala, for its having sheltered numerous sages in the past, has now grown incomparable because Lord Sri Ramana Maharshi has chosen this hill among many other holy places, for his abode !

— KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI.



The method most often recommended by Bhagavan Ramana is self-enquiry, putting the question *Who am I?* In all our actions in life and reactions to what happens to us, every one of us says, "I did this, this has happened to me, I feel happy, I feel miserable." "I" then is a constant factor in all these statements. Bhagavan says that, if you try to find out who that "I" is, you will discover that it is in the last resort nothing but the Universal Self or the Higher Power shining through you as through everything else.

As a matter of fact, there are as many methods of approach as there are human beings, though they can all be brought under three or four broad categories. Each man must pursue his own particular method, taking into account all his problems and his situation in life. The only requirements are the faith that reality can be reached and a sincere and constant attempt to reach it. If you start with faith you will experience something which goes to prove that your faith was justified, faith is thus only the initial step. Later it grows as a result of your own experience. When you learn the letters of the alphabet or elementary arithmetic, you ask no questions, but still, after learning the first steps you become a master of language and mathematics, able to use and enjoy them. In the spiritual field too progress is along similar lines.

Progress is of course, difficult, but not so difficult as people imagine. The difficulty often experienced by aspirants is that when they begin to meditate or pray, their minds wander. This is nothing unusual and happens even in the case of the trained aspirant, who however can bring back the mind into unison with Infinite sooner than the beginner.

Each man must approach the Higher Power according to the method which he finds most suitable to him, but I can offer some formu-

lae about the nature of this Higher Power which may be of help to aspirants. The first formula is that the Higher Power is prepared to help and guide you if you are sincere and are prepared to shed your own little ego. Further, the Higher Power is prepared to help you as you are; you need not be weighed down by thoughts of your unworthiness.

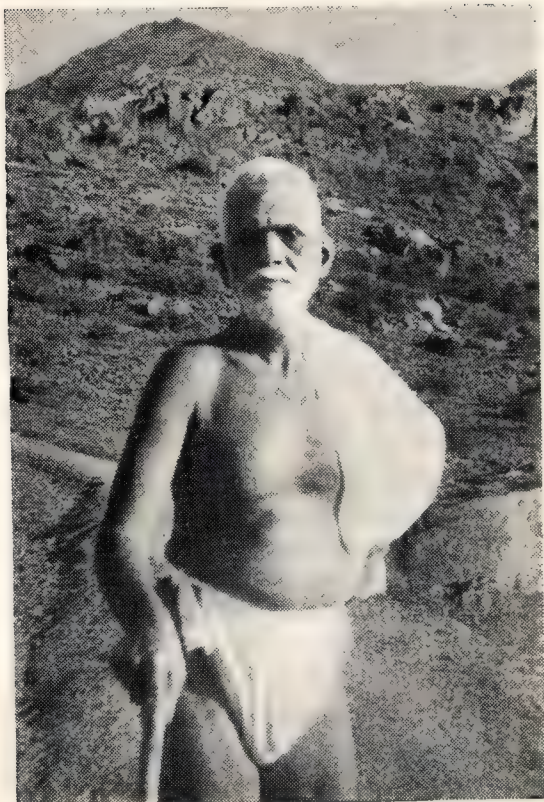
The second formula is that the Higher Power or God is the greatest anti-depressant you can imagine. He is greater than the greatest misery which can ever overtake you, as the sun is more powerful than the densest darkness.

The third formula may be explained by some simple algebraic equation. In $X - 1 = 0$, the only value of X is 1 and there is only one answer. Take $(X - 1) \times (X - 2) = 0$. Here there are two values of X , namely $X = 1$ or $X = 2$. Therefore there are two solutions or answers. Similarly in $(X - 1) \times (X - 2) \times (X - 4) = 0$ there are three solutions namely $X = 1$, $X = 2$, $X = 4$, and so on. Now at any moment a man has a number of problems. The problems may vary from second to second. My definition of God is that He is that X or unknown quantity which can solve all our problems at any given moment. The solution may be at the physical or mental or some other level. Further, till we reach the goal, some problems may not be solved at all. The nearer we approach the ideal, the fewer the problems defying solution. Reaching God is the ultimate solution of all our problems.

The merit of these formulae is that they enable one to pray to the Higher Power or meditate upon it in one's present predicament and present state without resort to any suppression or repression. Help comes from above and makes us see for ourselves that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

In order to be what you are,
 Forbear to split Mind.
 Let Wholeness obtain.

— WEI WU WEI.



Surrender

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

It is well known that Bhagavan Ramana is an exponent of Advaita and the method of *vichara*. According to him, the shortest and most direct method of Self-realization is, for each one of us, to dive within ourselves and enquire where this 'I' or 'Ego' arises within the body. He assures us that if we do so, the 'I' will disappear and merge in the Self from which it originated. But Bhagavan takes care to add: "If you say you are not strong enough to adopt this method, then surrender yourself to the source of all strength". The great Upanishadic teaching, of which the famous Sankara was the ablest exponent, is: "The Self alone exists and That Thou art." While this is logically unassailable, it has its limitations when poor man seeks to attain the spiritual goal with this alone as a guide. So long as you are in the region of speculation, reasoning and logic, advaita is all right. The moment you seek

to establish some contact with the divine essence, dual conceptions of a worshipper and the worshipped or an *atman* and a *paramātmān* or a soul and an over-soul inevitably come on the scene. "Man may cry against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realize God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking of God as a man", said Swami Vivekananda; and he is no mean authority on the subject. The great Sankara, than whom there is no more uncompromising Advaitin or Absolutist, has left behind works like *Sivanandalahari*, *Bhaja-govindam* and *Soundaryalahari* which are outpourings from the heart of a devotee to a God whom he worships. Bhagavan himself has composed a *Marital Garland of Letters* in which he pours out in exquisite language his love to the beloved, the universal Arunachala. The great Appayya Deekshitar, while fully admiring Advaita and following it, has never-

theless recommended in strong terms utter surrender to God in his well known *Atmarpanastuti* also known as *Unmatta Panchasat*. Instances may be multiplied, but it is hardly necessary. For one to whom the method of enquiry appeals or seems easy, there will be a hundred to whom the path of devotion will appear easier. I have found it so even among Bhagavan's devotees.

In the path of devotion, one chooses some deity or other to which one surrenders one's ego. In the case of devotees of Bhagavan I would suggest that they need not go in search of an *Ishta Devata* but stick to Bhagavan alone whose figure is familiar to them and will arouse devotion and love in their hearts. If they require a *mantra*, as is usual with Hindu devotees, I suggest *Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya* which will do excellently well. There have been devotees who have followed this method with success.

Every *jivanmukta*, i.e., every sage, who while still in the body has realized the Self, is none else than the Self. To know the Self is to become the Self. Becoming is being. This is well known. But there is an incident in Bhagavan's life bearing upon this topic which is very interesting and in my opinion specially instructive.

Many years ago, when Bhagavan was still on the hill, a scholar and devotee named Amritananda composed a stanza in a lilting metre, wrote it on a piece of paper and placed it before Bhagavan. The purport of the stanza was : "In my heart I yearn to know

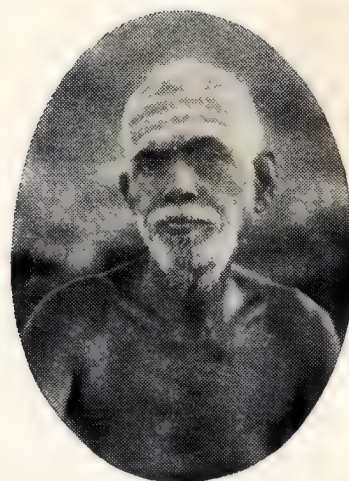
if Bhagavan Muni Ramana, the unique Guru, is Hari or some other God or an ancient rishi like Vararuchi". Bhagavan did not immediately give a reply. But after a while he took up the paper and in a sportive mood wrote on it what must be considered his reply in the form of another stanza in the same metre and left it where it lay before. The devotee came back and, on seeing the stanza composed by Bhagavan, was delighted. The reply was : "Arunachala Ramana is the *paramātmān* who is living in the hearts of every living being from Hari downward". As the question was about Bhagavan (referring to him as Arunachala Ramana) the answer was also to be taken to refer to Bhagavan. Once when I was talking about this incident to Bhagavan I said that it was possible that some might interpret the Arunachala Ramana in his reply as referring to God Arunachala of Tiruvannamalai. He said ; "Yes. I thought, 'let him interpret it either way' and purposely left it like that." Let us therefore confidently and with absolute faith hold on to him in complete surrender and his grace will do the rest.

Let us remember Bhagavan's words : "People come and tell me that I must grant them Grace. They seem to think that Grace is something which I keep under lock and key. Grace and God are not different. Grace is another name for God." All that we need do is to keep our hearts open so that Guru's Grace may flow in, as sunshine through an open window.

Bondage and Liberation

.....
Sri Maharshi

Bondage and Liberation have no reality of their own. They cannot function of their own accord. If one enquires for whom is bondage and liberation ? it will be seen "they are for me". If one enquires *Who am I* ? one will see that there is no such thing as the "I".



Ramana Sat-Guru

.....
ARTHUR OSBORNE

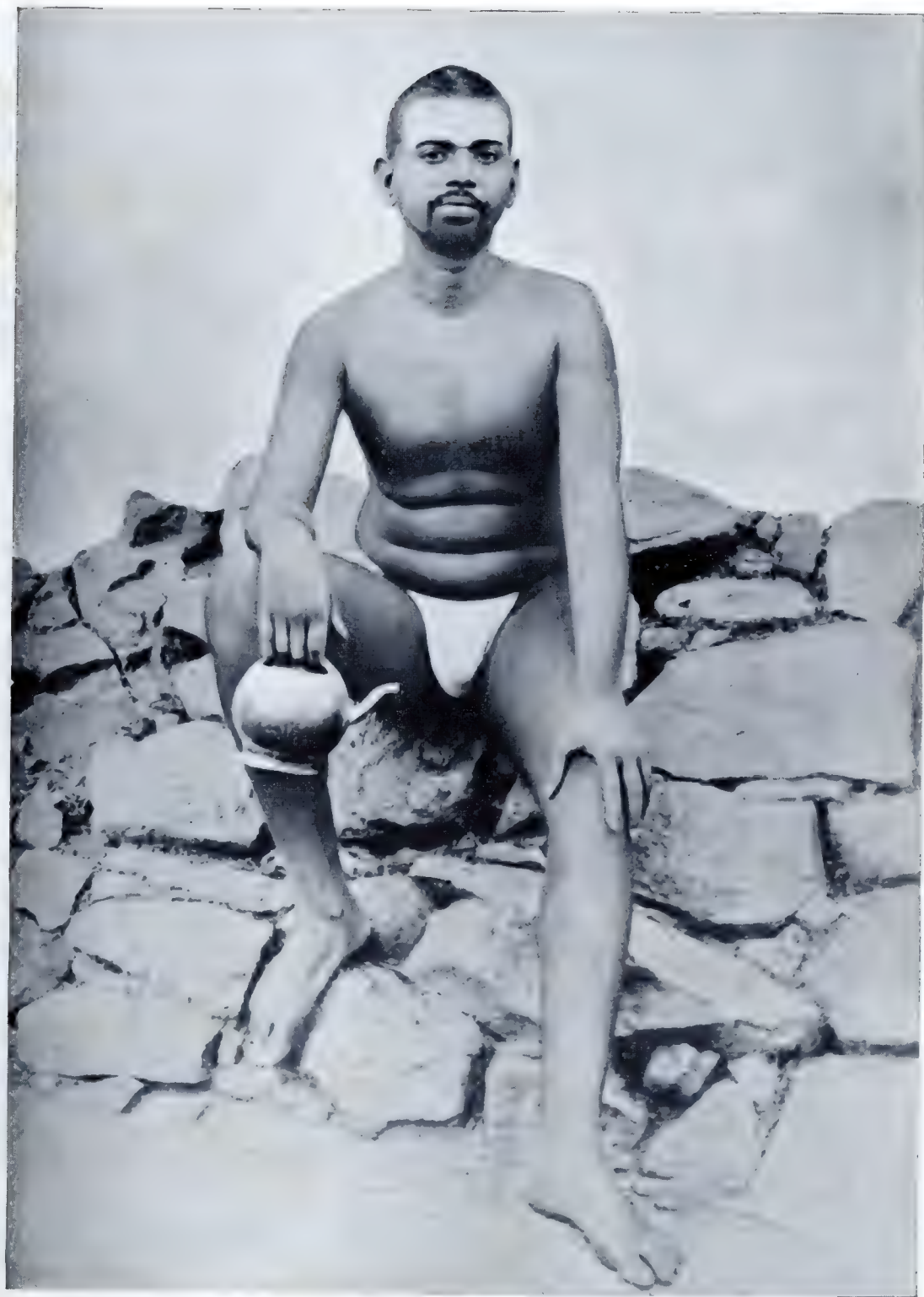
To feel, to know, to be the Christ within —
Can there then be love for Christ on earth,
Walking like men, seen as a man is seen?
Seek not to argue; love has greater worth.
Love makes man kin

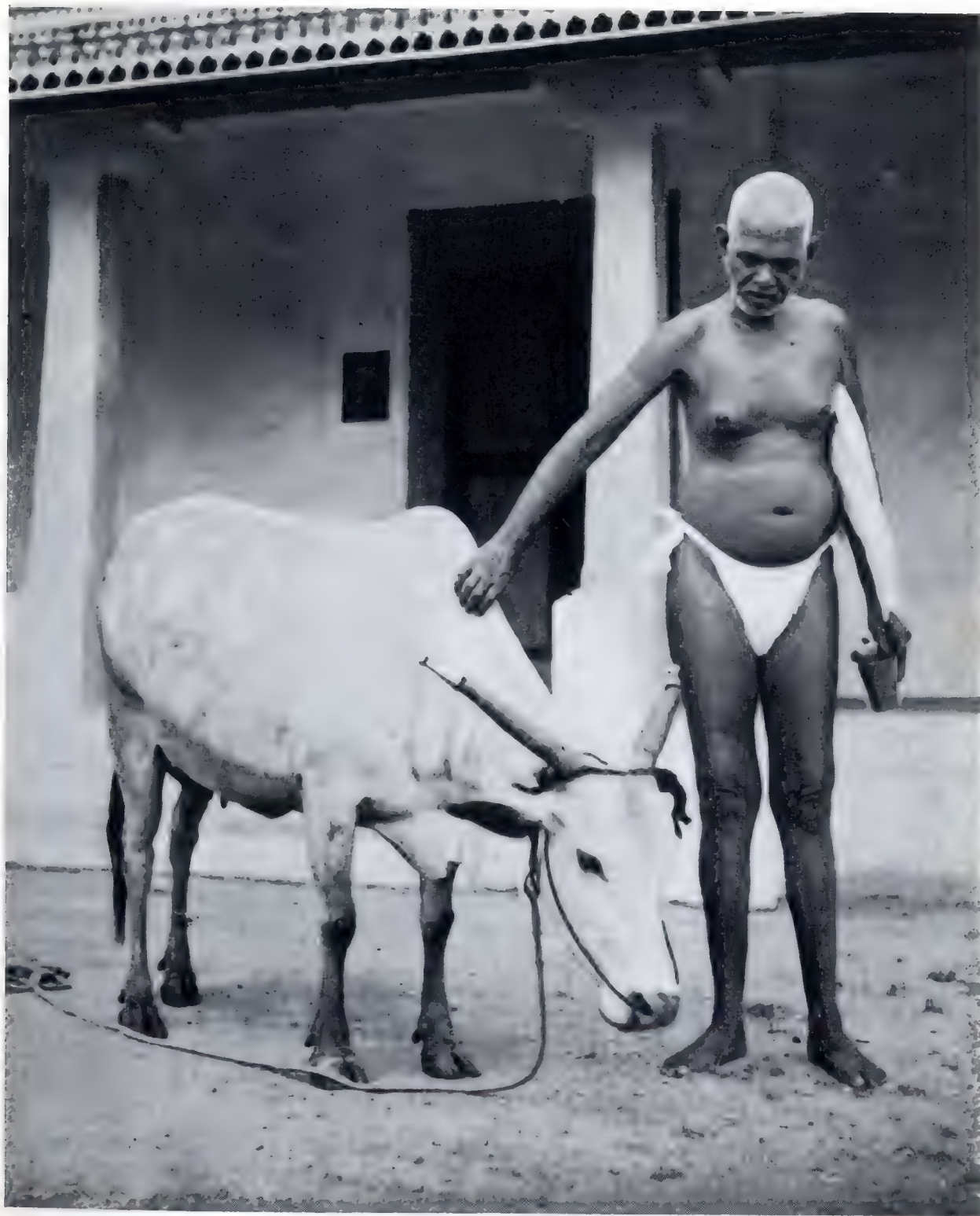
With the Beloved. Such have I known,
Him of the lustrous eyes, Him whose sole look
Pierced to the heart, wherein the seed was sown
Of wisdom deeper than in holy book,
Of truth alone

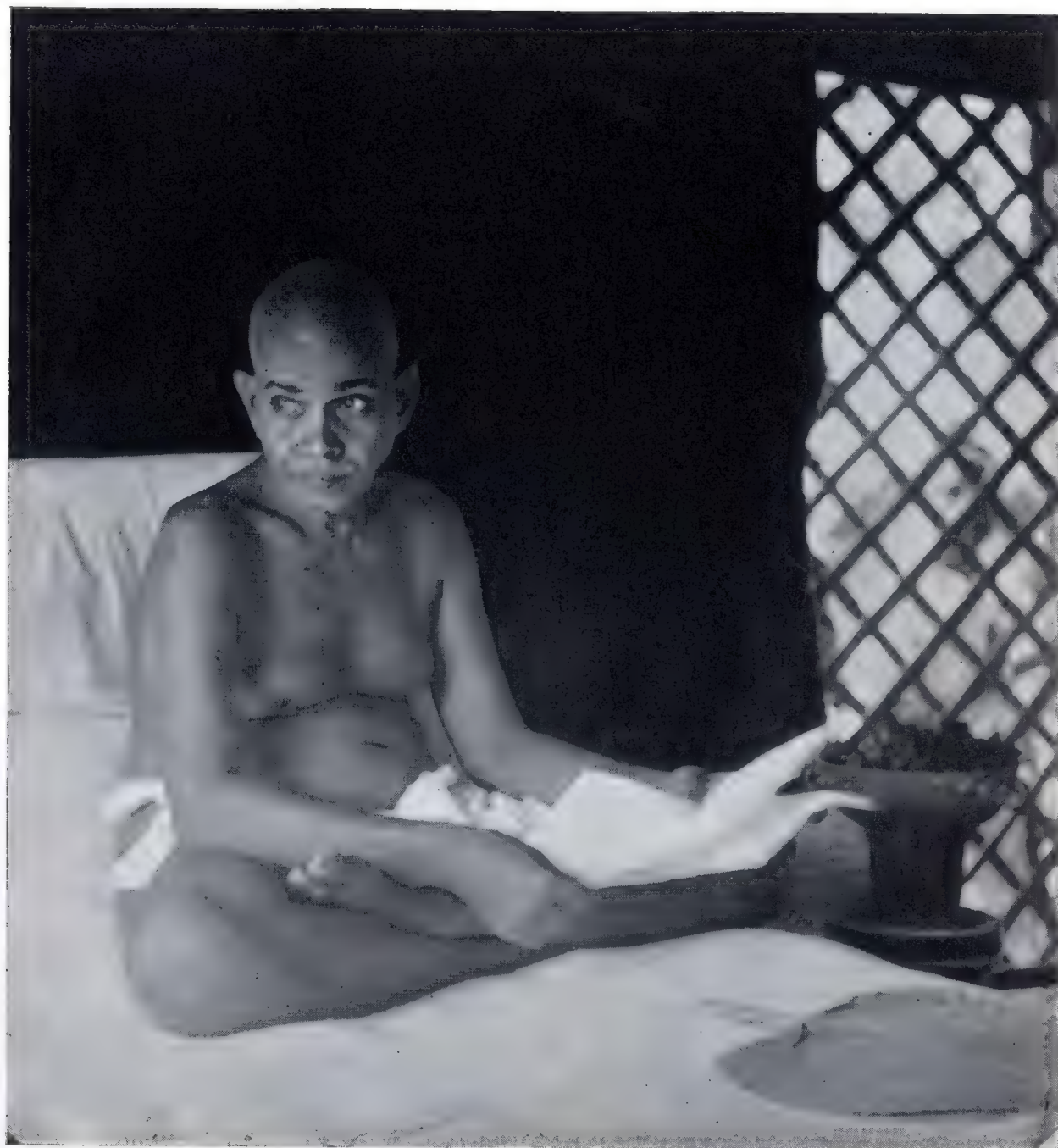
Not to be learned but lived, Truth in its hour
To sprout within the heart's dark, wintry earth
And grow a vibrant thing, then, come to power,
To slay the seeming self that gave it birth,
Or to devour.

Heart of my heart, seen outwardly as one
In human form, to draw my human love,
Lord Ramana, Guru, the risen Sun,
Self manifest, the guide of all who rove,
Lost and alone,

In tangled thoughts and vain imaginings,
Back to pure Being, which your radiant smile,
Full of compassion for my wanderings,
Tells me I always was, though lost this while
In a world of things.









THE *Ārdra* of Margasirsha is an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar. It commemorates the victory of Lord Siva over the demon Andhaka. The very name *andhaka* means the 'dark', the 'blind'; and Andhaka stands for *ajnana*, *avidya* (ignorance, nescience). It was on the *Ārdra* day that the Lord vanquished Andhaka in order that the world may be saved, in order that humanity may see the face of goodness. The myth of the conquest of Andhaka signifies the victory of the forces of light over those of darkness, of *vidya* over *avidya*, of the supreme good over all that is evil. After killing the demon of darkness the Lord danced his

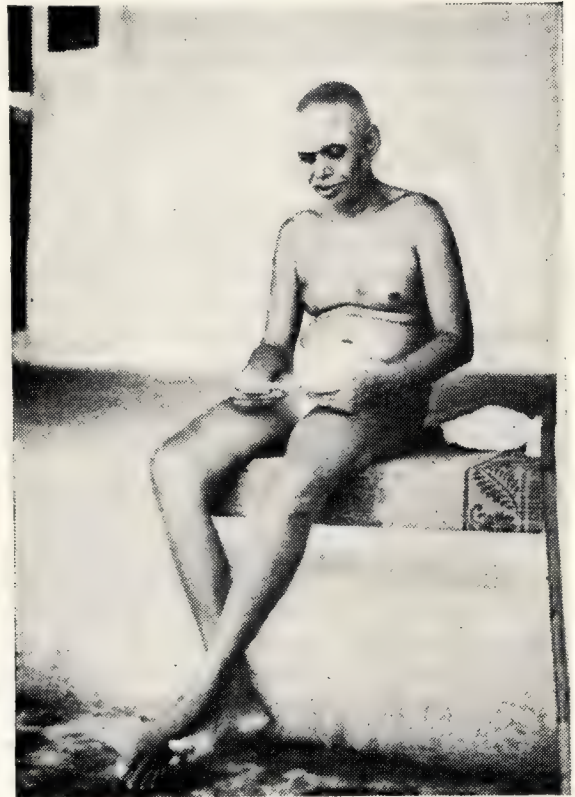
no local habitation, we have given a place. Sri Ramana is the Incarnation of Advaita. He is Advaita-Vedanta itself and the truth of Advaita Vedanta remains unaffected by time, space and causation. In his introduction to the *Gita-bhashya* Acharya Sankara speaks of the *avatara* of Lord Krishna and its significance. The philosophy of Avatara as expounded here by Sri Sankara is applicable in the case of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. The

Ramana, The Light Supreme

.....
Dr. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN
.....

Cosmic Dance, which was the expression of Supreme Joy, which alone sustains the universe. It is in commemoration of this great event that the image of Lord Nataraja is taken out of the temples in procession on the *Ārdra* Day. It was in the year 1879 on this auspicious day and moment when the Nataraja image was being taken into the temple at Tiruchuzhi at the conclusion of the procession that Bhagavan Sri Ramana was born. So, it is significant that our Lord chose the most auspicious day, *Ārdra*, for making his advent into this world.

To one who has no birth at all, we have assigned a date of birth. To one who has



blessed Lord is endowed with all auspicious qualities like illumination, auspiciousness, strength, vitality and splendour. These qualities are present in Him always and not for some time alone. He has under his control *Maya* or *Prakriti* which consists of the three *gunas* which are responsible for the world-manifestation. Through *Maya* He seems to be born and to bear a body. Our Bhagavan has no name, no date of birth, but appears to bear a name and to have taken birth, because

humanity has to be saved by the Truth of His Being which is non-dual. He is eternally born, and yet unborn. Birthday is an eternal birthday.

The story of Tiruvannamalai (Arunachala) is itself significant, as is the festival connected with Sri Bhagavan's birth. The Creator Brahma and the Protector Vishnu are said to have quarrelled over which of them was superior. In order to teach them a lesson Lord Siva appeared as a Column of Light. Brahma and Vishnu could not discover its top or bottom. It is this limitless Light that Arunachala stands for. Bhagavan found in it the Light Supreme which he Himself is.

Bhagavan did not leave the precincts of Arunachala once he had arrived there. Why should he? The world should go to the Guru; there is no need for the Guru to go anywhere. If he went to the world, he would only be misunderstood as Sri Krishna complains: "Because I have taken birth as a human being people do not understand me. On the contrary, they scold me, they abuse me, they revile me". The world can only revile what it does not understand! Even to Arjuna, His own cousin and dear disciple, the Lord had to reveal His Cosmic Form in order to make him understand. Arjuna repents for his past behaviour and says: "Out of familiarity and not knowing your greatness, I have called you 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Friend'. Please forgive me for the disrespect I have shown towards you." Because of His easy accessibility Sri Krishna was not understood by the world. The world seldom understands the Guru who goes to it!

It is only when the world has learnt to go to the Guru that it will feel inclined to listen to him. Sri Ramana lived in Arunachala, but the world, even the Western world, went to him. How did this happen? Because Bhagavan was the Light Transcendent and light does not require advertisement, as darkness does. Without any drum-beating, without any propaganda, the Light of Arunachala has

spread far and wide, and it is on that light that we should meditate. We saw before our eyes the brightness of that *savitur varenyam bhargo devasya*. If some of us could not see it, it was our fault, not that of the Light. And the light has no need of speech. It is only in darkness you require the help of speech in order to identify objects, but where there is light and your eyes are all right you need not be told what is around you. And so, for the most part, Bhagavan Ramana kept silent. Silence was his mode of communication. Today when people all over the world are striving hard to find out new means and methods of communication, communication becomes more and more difficult. But here the Blessed Lord, seated or reclining on his couch in a corner of the Old Hall, was communicating not only with those who sat in front of him, but with devotees in distant continents. Even his speech was of a quality that is far different from the speech that we are accustomed to. It was scarcely distinguishable from silence. Some of us have watched and can recall the grand silent drama that was being enacted constantly in that auspicious Hall. People came, strangers came, with long lists of questions, but many of them forgot or felt no need, to put their questions. Their doubts had been dispelled, their needs fulfilled!

The most remarkable feature about Bhagavan's form was his pair of eyes, extremely penetrating and profoundly fascinating. Once you had come within the range of Bhagavan's beaming eyes, there was no need for any other sadhana. Once those eyes had rested upon you, there was no more fear or worry for you. Mr. Humphreys, the very first European to see our Master, reports to a magazine in England: "For half an hour I looked into the Maharshi's eyes, which never changed their expression of deep contemplation." This was written in 1911. Those of us who met the Master much later could testify that those eyes retained their brightness to the last moment of the Master's earthly existence.

Bhagavan spoke occasionally : he spoke not for the sake of speaking as most of us do. He wrote not for the sake of writing, because he was no writer at all. But he spoke and wrote because he wanted to save us !

There is a fine *sloka* in the *Sankara-Digvijaya*, where Madhavacharya offers obeisance to Dakshinamurthi and Sankara.

“Rising from his seat beneath the banyan tree, and breaking his silence, Dakshinamurthi, out of compassion for humanity which is being burnt in the forest-fire of *samsara*, took form as Sankara who moved about constantly and spoke profusely. The silent Dakshinamurthi became the speaking Sankara. The unmoving began to move.”

Bhagavan Sri Ramana struck a compromise between the silence and stasis of Dakshinamurthi and the speech and movement of Sankara, because today we require the message of both *achara* and *chara*, *mauna* and *vāk*. Bhagavan Ramana spoke and wrote in order that we may understand him. The path he has expounded in what he has written and spoken is the same path of Light which has come from the ancient sages and seers of the Upanishads. It is the Light of Jnana which alone can save us. And this is the central message of Sri Bhagavan, the Light Divine, to modern man.

“I” cannot be the Body

SRI RAMANA

Actions such as going and coming belong only to the body. When one says I went, I came, it amounts to saying that the body is “I”. But can the body be said to be the Conscious “I”, since the body was not before it was born, is made up of the five elements, is non-existent in the state of deep sleep, and becomes a corpse when dead ? Can the body which is inert like a log of wood be said to shine as “I” “I” ?

Therefore the “I” consciousness which at first arises in respect of the body, is referred to variously as self-conceit (*tarbodham*), egoity (*ahankara*), nescience (*avidhya*), maya (*mala*), and individual soul (*jiva*).

Making the corpse body remain as a corpse and not even uttering the word “I”, enquire keenly what is it that rises as “I” ? There will shine in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of the form of “I” “I” of it’s own accord, the pure consciousness which is unlimited and One, the limited and many thoughts having disappeared. If one remains quiescent without abandoning that experience, the egoity, the individual sense of the form of “I-am-the-body” will be totally destroyed. At the end the final thought, viz., the “I” form also will be quenched like the fire that burns camphor.

— From *Self-Enquiry*.

The Ramana Path

SADHU OM

How ridiculous is it that without inquiring *Who am I?* we set out to know all about the world and God. And is it any wonder that all that we hear and read about these things only fills us with doubts. When I look at objects through coloured spectacles but do not know the colour of the glasses I am wearing, how can I determine the true colours of the objects I see? Even so, without a clear knowledge of who I am, I can never truly know anything else.

In the absence of self-knowledge all one's learning, wealth and power are false shows, not true possessions.

Who is this "I"? Does he really exist? Has he a separate being? Should we not first inquire and decide how real he is? Is it not more necessary, far easier and indeed wiser for this "I" to inquire about his own status and the nature of his being? Sri Bhagavan says, on the contrary, "Without first opening your box and examining its contents, why do you consider yourself poor and set up an outcry, 'I am a pauper, a penniless pauper!'? Open your box, look into it; find what it holds. In other words, look within; find out who you are. If after finding this, you feel any further need (for God, *moksha*, bliss or anything else), go ahead and get it!"

Again and again Bhagavan declares: "This path of self-enquiry is easier than all other paths. It is the one direct path open to all."

Instead of considering humbly and seriously why Bhagavan says this and what he means by it, some of us lose heart and shrug his teaching off, saying, "It is easy enough for Bhagavan, but not at all for the rest of us." Since our effort and our success depend on our faith and courage, let us look at the reasona-

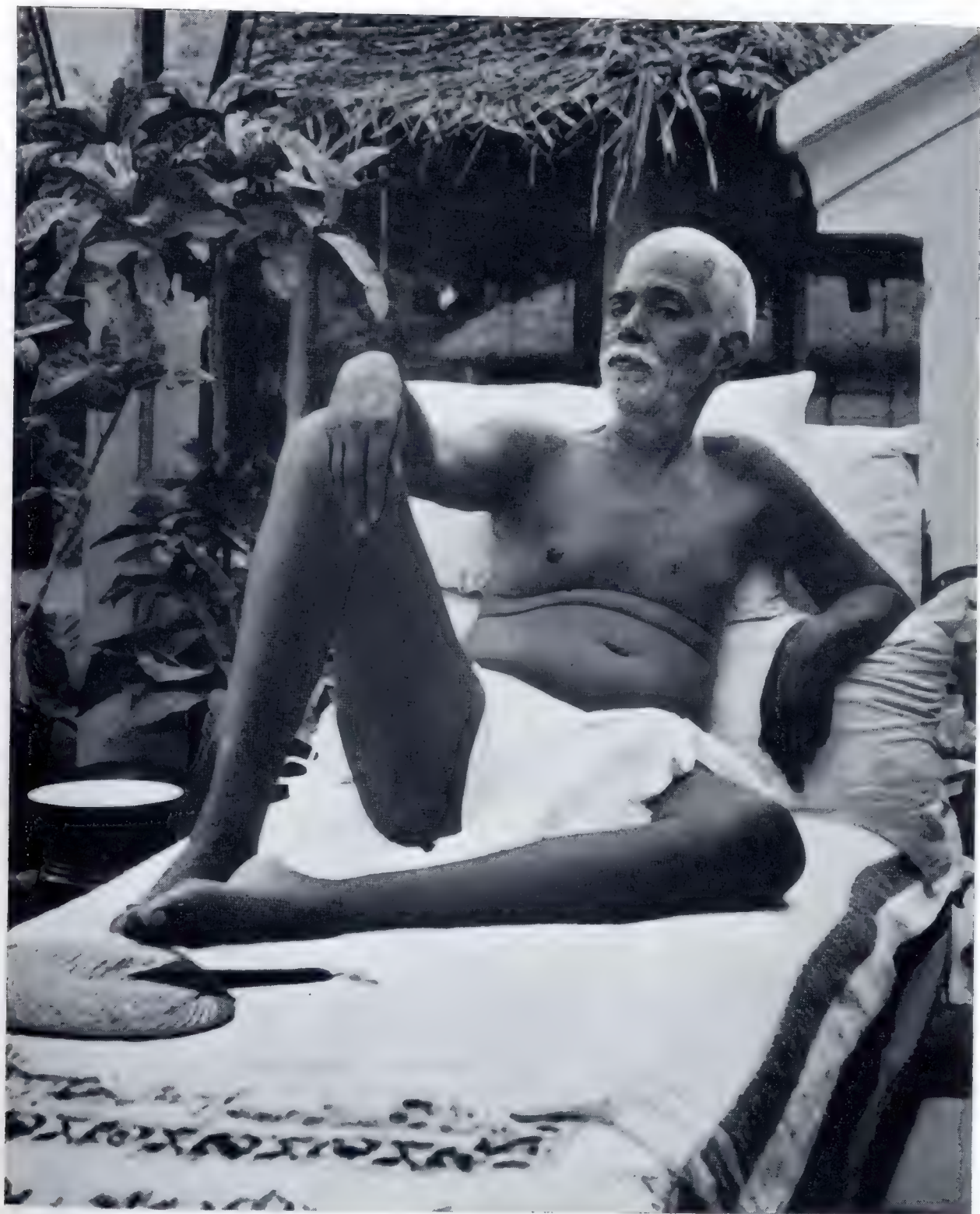


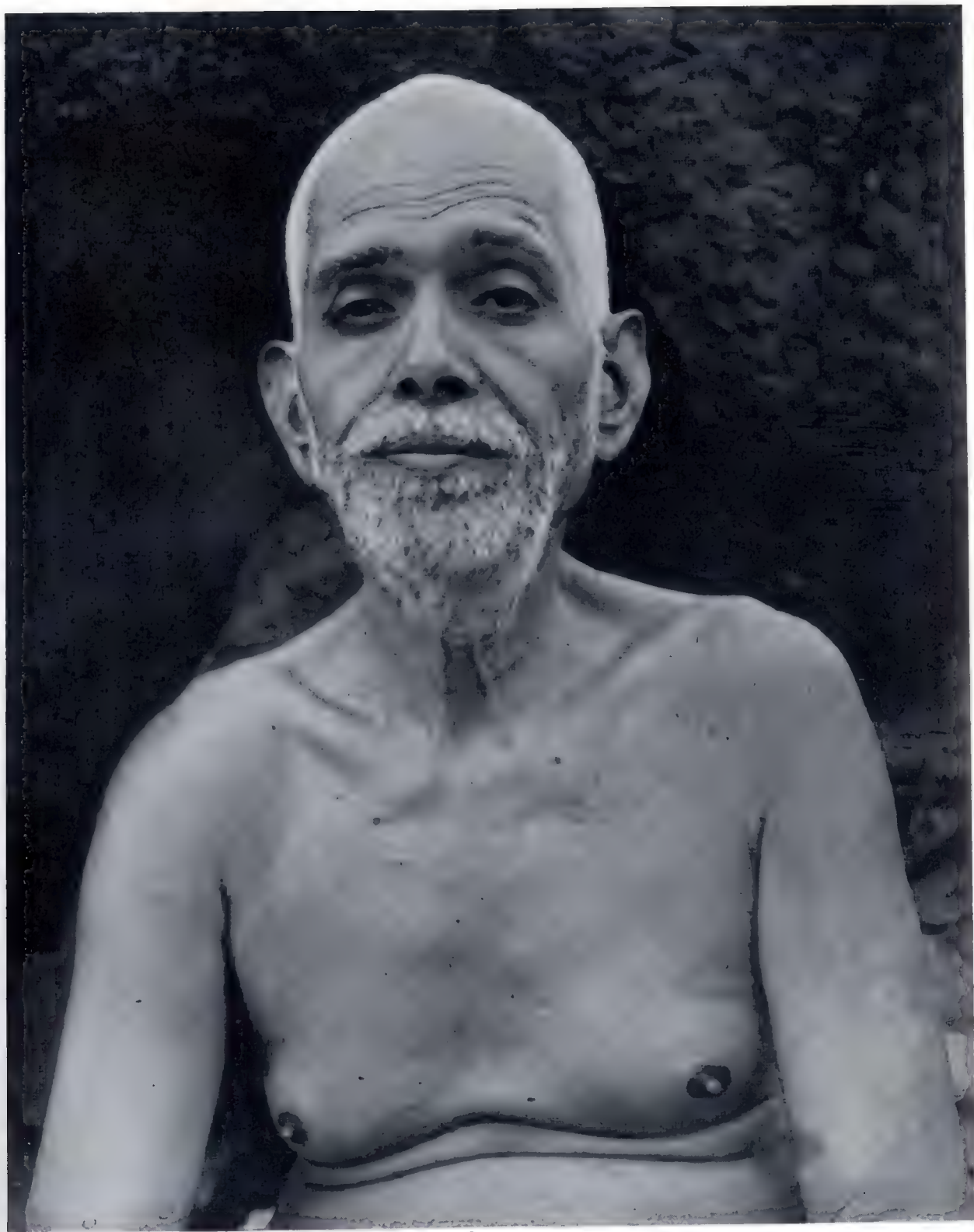
ble ground for Bhagavan's clearly-expressed opinion.

What is meant by the terms "easy" and "difficult"? What we have desired and enjoyed and known is "easy". What we do not desire, cannot achieve or do not know is "difficult". *Japa*, *dhyana*, *yoga* and other exercises are then difficult, while quest of the Self (than which nothing is more desired, more accessible or more enjoyable) is easy.

The name and form of a God, a sacred mantra like the *Gayatri*, these gifts come to us through parent or teacher. We know them after being told about them by someone else. Our faith in them, our love of them, follows — and does not precede — our hearing of their wonderful power from someone else. The joys of *japa*, *dhyana*, ritual worship, *pranayama* and other yogic practices are all new-found experiences.

But the Self is ever known, directly and not through hearsay. It is the natural experience of our inherent desire, will and knowledge.





We love the Self, for it is love. We experience the Self without the body every day in deep sleep. In the darkest room we know the Self as being. We are aware of it long before we are aware of "you" and "they". In all circumstances we are aware of it, even in sound sleep without body or mind. The Self is thus what we — ordinary folk — desire most, experience always and know best. How could the search for it be difficult? The Self is here and now and always present; there is no need to search and find it; the weakest mind will gain strength and reach its goal when it seeks its own source. The Maha Yoga of self-enquiry consists solely in turning away from the non-Self, the unreal.

Going away from the east means going towards the west. It is one and the same thing whether we say, "Turn away from the non-Self, the five sheaths" or we say, "Search and find 'What am I?', 'Who am I?'"

The negative method of giving up the non-Self is indeed difficult; the positive method of going home to the Self is far easier and pleasanter. Is it better to tell the patient, "Don't think of the monkey when you drink the

medicine", or to tell him "Think of the elephant when you drink the medicine"? Bhagavan's positive method of seeking the Self and being indifferent to lust, anger, greed and the rest brings us easier victory over these evils than direct opposition to them. To end all evils, seek and end the ego, the sole source of all of them.

When thought turns towards the Self, thinking ceases and gives place to pure awareness; action becomes being; *karma* becomes *akarma*. The mind is merged in the Self; only the Self remains as awareness.

An iron needle in a magnetic field need not be magnetized. If it does not behave like a magnet, remove the rust. Then it knows where it belongs. To turn the mind inward is to remove the rust. Open the window, the sunlight rushes in. No effort is needed to bring it into your home. In fear and trembling, do not keep your windows shut. In the search for the Self, there is no room for effort for there is none to make it. In a moment the ego dies, the Self awakens. The seeker and the search end together in this flash of Awareness.

The Mind

.....
Sri Bhagavan

"The Mind is something mysterious. Mind is like *ākasa* (ether). Just as there are objects in *ākasa*, there are the thoughts in the mind. The *ākasa* is the counterpart of the mind, and objects are of thoughts. The objects are mental creations. To measure them is similar to trying to stamp with one foot on the head of the shadow cast by oneself. The farther one moves the farther the shadow does also.

The Universe is only an object created by the mind. One must reach the Self in order to reach the Universe. The fact is the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. How can you extinguish it by the thought of doing so, or by a desire? Thoughts and desires are part and parcel of the mind. The only way to do it is to find its source and hold on to it. *Atma Vichara* (self-investigation) is the practical way. The objective world is only in the subjective consciousness. The Self is the only Reality that permeates and envelops the world."

— from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

The Great Guru and a Learned Disciple

.....
KRISHNA BHIKSHU

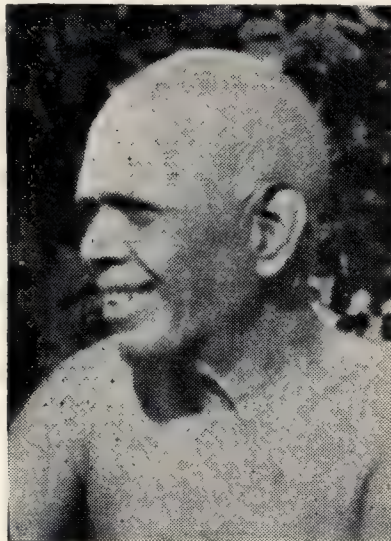
THE swelling crowds that had come to Tiruvannamalai to attend the *Brahma Utsava* swarmed all over the town and invaded even the secluded caves and shrines on the Hill. At that time, a little after midday, there were but two persons in the Virupakshi Cave : a youth of 27 years, clad only in a *koupina*, sitting on the platform before the cave and a youth a little older, holding the feet of the younger man and supplicating in desperate tones : 'Sir, I have read all that there is to read — the Vedas and the *Sastras*, the *mantras* and all the literary works. I have performed *mantra japa* by the crores ; but I find it has all been ineffectual. I do not seem to have realized the nature of *tapas*. Enlighten me, O Master'. The figure on the platform gazed at the suppliant for a short while and then muttered in broken Tamil : 'See whence this notion of the self comes. You will dissolve into it. That is *tapas*. When you do the *japa* note constantly the source whence the sound of *mantra* emanates. You will dissolve into it. That is TAPAS.'

The scene is not unfamiliar. In the age of the Upanishads, Narada had asked Sanatkumara a similar question : 'I have read all that there is to read but I am yet to know the nature of Brahman. Please enlighten me' — and the Guru answered, 'All this is learning of the lower kind ; you have yet to master the higher learning, that is the *Brahma Vidya*.'

Who were the two young people who enacted this scene in this century ? The suppliant was the far-famed Kavyakanta Ganapati

Muni and the Guru was the *Brahmana Swami*, now widely known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The guru is the son of Tiruchuzhi Sundaram Iyer, a pleader. At the age of 16 the boy is said to have realized himself and come here at the behest of the Father. He has been observing silence ever since. This is the first time he ever gave instruction by word of mouth. No doubt he had been writing down, on the floor or on a slate, answers to questions. The suppliant Ganapathi Muni is a well known figure in learned circles. A gifted Sanskrit poet, he has toured all over India and has disciples by the score. He is a great *sadhaka* and has visited all the *punya kshetras* of India. Here he is an *acharya* in the local Veda Patashala.



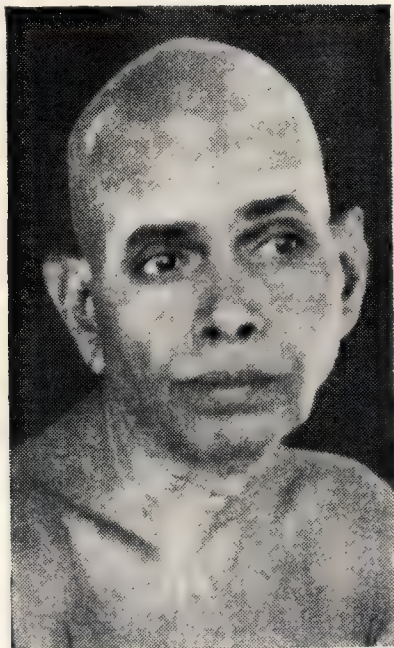
What is unique about this teaching? Sacred books have told us that all notions, including the notion of 'I' of the individual or the ego, take their rise in pure Consciousness. That is *Chit*. Therefore when you plunge into the source of the idea of 'I' or merge into a single concentrated thought about the Divine, you go to the Divine Source. And this sadhana burns away all thoughts about the objective world. In *Yoga Vasishta* it is said, "Oh Rama, this investigation 'Who Am I?' is the fire which burns away the tree of *chitta*, i.e., the mind." There seems to be nothing new in this. Therefore, you may say that the Maharshi emphasizes this mode of sadhana. Let us analyse the implications of this mode. All thoughts are based on the single thought 'I'. Without this thought no other thought arises. Any thought implies the existence of the 'I'-thought. And when all thoughts disappear as in sleep the thought of 'I' also disappears. But in *adhyatma* circles the effort has been to make this 'I'-thought disappear consciously and get into the state of *jagrat-sushupti* (wakeful sleep). The result then would be that all the world disappears from the mind. And that is the realization of the One without any second, the *siddhi* sought by a *sadhaka*. It is easy to see that even the little 'I' has no name and form. It can be recognized but by its manifestation and activity in the everyday world and, therefore, needless to say, the big remnant of Consciousness when all worldly thoughts have disappeared, has no name and form and no limit. It cannot be concentrated by the mind nor expressed in speech.

Now, let us follow the course of sadhana more closely. When the mind disappears, how to recognize the consciousness remaining over? The knowing, the knower and the act of knowing, essential in every day knowledge, have no place there. Instead, the knowing is by way of being. There is no becoming here. What exists as the empirical world disappears. This is not an evolution

from a lower stage to a higher stage, but a going back to the source wherefrom the world of manifestation arose. The world conceals its own source and the effort of the sadhana is to remove the covering, not to evolve into something. The world is always what it is, that is, the Brahman; the name and form conceal its real nature.

The Guru here has applied this logic to the mantra, for the questioner is a great *japi*. Mantra consists of selected words the repetition of which in sequence creates extraordinary effects on the *japi* and in the outer world where the words and the sound exist. The selected words are again selected forms of sound and their repetition *whether you know the meaning or not* have their existence in the subtle and gross worlds. The Guru here teaches that you may not know the meaning of the word uttered, but if you uttered the word that is the mantra, seeking the source of the sound, your personality first disappears into the personality of the mantra, i.e., the sound-forms uttered in the mantra, which again disappears into the source, *ākāśa*, i.e., *Dahara Akasa*.

This point of teaching given to the Kavyakanta has not been enunciated in any *mantra sastra* which emphasizes that you should deem your body as the *mantra-maya* or *devata-maya*, i.e., full of the spirit of the deity whose name you utter. This is the revelation given on that day by the Guru to his disciple. The Guru, a new path-finder in the spiritual world of sadhana, is entitled to be called a Rishi. So immediately after receiving the teaching Kavyakanta learned his name from an attendant and changed it into Ramana Maharshi. And as all the rishis are Bhagavans, i.e., persons who have the eight *siddhis*, he called him BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI. And he then directed his disciples by the hundreds to address the *Brahmana Swami* as Maharshi. And the personality of Sri Ramana became known to adepts in every nook and corner of India.



Bhagavan's Grace

.....
G. RAMASWAMI PILLAI

LIKE the experience of deep sleep, the experience of Truth or Self-realization cannot but be the same for all. Differences arise only in the expression of it in words as well as the technique of attaining it. The technique or the method of Self-Enquiry which Bhagavan has prescribed for Realization of the Self is unique and original and takes us beyond all known religions and philosophies. True, Bhagavan started as a devotee of Siva and he realized the Truth or attained Godhead like other sages. But what about the teaching? Who before him had said so clearly and emphatically that what we call the 'I' is the 'ego' and it is only a thought ('I-am-the-body'). It is the first thought when we wake up from sleep. Other thoughts follow. In sleep we have no thought and no 'I'. It is only in the waking state and in dream which is but a dream within a dream (which the waking state really is) that one has this "I" thought which is the source of all our misery and trouble. Getting rid of the ego through Self-Enquiry is realizing the Self or Truth, for there is no Truth apart from the Self. Whatever is, whether with or without form, is the Self.

Bhagavan's teaching is meant for this age. It is universal and must appeal to the scientifically and rationally minded people of today. Bhagavan himself has said and all earnest seekers have found that Self-Enquiry is easier than any other existing method or system or path. No doubt there is a reference to the ego (*dehatma buddhi*) in all the religious and philosophical writings of the world. But by no one as by Bhagavan has it been said so clearly that it is the first, main and only cause of *samsara* and that by getting rid of it one gets rid of the only obstacle (though this appears as many) that stands between one and the Reality — which one is.

Other methods are like cutting a tree from the top — you cut the leaves, branches, the stem and so on, till at last you may or may not reach the root which is the ego. In such cases the process is neither swift nor complete. But Bhagavan says, 'Strike, strike first at the root, the ego.' By striking at the root, the whole tree is cut down. Again, it is said that ignorance or *avidya* or *maya* is the cause of the whole mischief. But Bhagavan says, don't be scared by these high-sounding names; the

one thing which all these names indicate is the ego. There is no *maya* but the ego and there is no *avidya*, *ajnana*, or ignorance but the ego. Search for it within yourself. After some practice, you will find that it is nowhere to be found. What remains is yourself, the *turiya* or the 'Fourth State', beyond and beneath waking, dream and sleep, like the white screen beneath the projected images.

The *turiya* state is our own real nature. When one realizes this state one transcends the daily experience *jagrat*, *swapna* and *sushupti* and enjoys the bliss of oneness.

The lesson taught by Lord Siva to Brahma and Vishnu that Being sustains and transcends all egoistic existence is the main theme of the *Sthalapurana*. This is also the essence of Bhagavan's teaching. This identity is no mere accident. The Son embodies and explains the mystery of Arunachala, the Father.

Bhagavan came for this noble and necessary work and he did it for half a century and more. Everything had been prepared for the outward manifestation of that which had

already been accomplished in the causal plane. We have to be humble instruments in His Almighty hands to bring his mission to its destined end. The battle is over and the Self already conquered by Him for us.

According to Bhagavan, there are two elements in our make-up. The one is *Chit*, Pure Consciousness, the other *jada*, our physical body. The ego or the subtle body, a product of the combination of the two, is the source of all our troubles and miseries. If, by the Grace of Bhagavan, one dis-identifies oneself from the body, one realizes one's identity with the Atman and all problems are solved. Bhagavan's Grace is all-powerful and it helps Self-enquiry. It is love, knowledge and omnipotence all combined. It is a dynamic and benign spiritual power. No one can describe it. It can only be experienced. Let me appeal to devotees to ask themselves, "What can we do in return for all that we have received from Him?" Only Bhagavan's Grace can provide an answer and point the way!

The Mind: Sattvic and Rajasic

Sri Bhagavan

"With *vritti* one sees Knowledge. He also confounds *vritti* with Knowledge. *Vritti* is a mode of the mind. You are not the mind. You are beyond it.

Vritti is mistaken for Consciousness. It is only a phenomenon and operates in the region of *abhasa* (reflected consciousness). True Knowledge lies beyond the relative Knowledge and Ignorance. It is not in the shape of *vritti*. There are no subject or object in it.

Vritti belongs to the *Rajasic* (active) mind. The *Sattvic* mind (mind in repose) is free from it. The *sattvic* mind is witness of the *rajasic*. It is true Consciousness. Still it is called *sattvic* mind because the knowledge of being witness, is the function of *abhasa* only. Mind is the *abhasa*. Such knowledge implies the mind. But the mind by itself is inoperative. Therefore it is called the *Sattvic Mind*. The *sattvic mind* is in fact, the Absolute Consciousness."

— from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

EMERSON wrote : " While the finite weeps, the Infinite lies in sleeping repose."

This wonderful truth, although repeated by the wise throughout the ages, is realized by few. Instead the human heart, that thirsty pilgrim, embarks upon an arduous quest in search of 'living-waters', and consequently undergoes severe trials.

The pilgrim may be likened to the foolish fishes who dwelt in the sea and yet raised the question : 'What is water?'. It was only one 'filled with wisdom' who was able to dispel their delusion when he told them :

'O ye who seek to solve the knot
Ye live in God, yet know Him not.
Ye sit beside the river's brink
Yet crave in vain a drop to drink.
Ye dwell beside a countless store
Yet perish hungry at the door.'

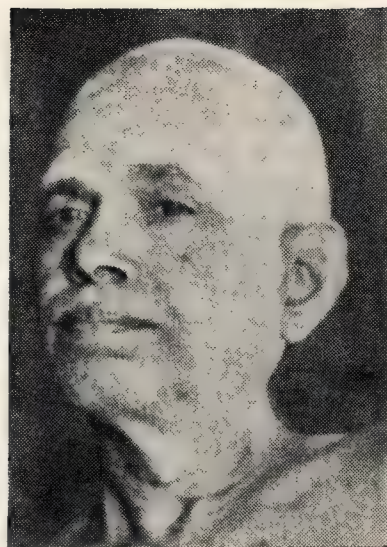
So too, in order to restore the radiant lustre of Truth, do saints and seers make their appearance in the desert of illusion in order to allay the thirst of weary travellers.

Heart-Eloquence

Mrs. GLADYS de MEUTER

Such an Oasis of Peace was Ramana Maharshi, known to those who love him as Bhagavan, The Blessed One. Whether clothed in the garment of flesh or without it, Bhagavan remains for those who understand his teachings the 'Ever-Luminous-Presence.'

Keen intellects came to him, their thought-rapier unsheathed and ready to thrust and parry, yet they were disarmed before his wisdom — a Wisdom which outshone the fretful gleamings of those who sought to apprehend Truth while yet 'addicted to much thinking.'



The pure in heart came to Bhagavan in the guise of adults, children and animals, and upon these Grace was abundantly showered and appreciated.

There were also those who labelled themselves 'unbelievers'. They too found their way to Bhagavan, and a joyful surprise awaited them, for secret blooms appeared within them....

As flowers and plants respond to light and air, so did hearts bask in that Presence.

* * *

It is also the privilege of the devotee to answer, as well as he is able, some pertinent questions regarding Bhagavan, whenever they arise.

(a) *Ramana Maharshi was a Hindu Sage, was he not?*

'A Sage is beyond the limitations of race and creed. He IS.'

(b) *Was he in truth a teacher or Guru?*

'He who has no dream does not identify himself with the dreamer. To Bhagavan, there was no teacher, devotee or path.'

- (c) *It is said that Ramana Maharshi was a contemplative. What then of the active and Bhakti paths?*

‘Once again it is necessary to reiterate that for Bhagavan there were no “paths”, but to the seeker who was unable to grasp and acknowledge this, was given individual guidance according to the inner development of the pilgrim.

‘Wisdom-Love-Activity are fused in perfect harmony when made manifest in a Sage. A contemplative may “appear” inactive, but this is not so. Only a Self-Realized is intensely active, diffusing loving wisdom in never ending life-movement.’

- (d) *What practical use can we make of the Maharshi's teachings in our daily lives?*

‘More eloquent than words is the example of his life, for that alone is a magnificent guide. Added to that is the “Self-Enquiry”, which may be used as the Sword of Wisdom in the spiritual life. So often we confuse ourselves by identifying Selfhood with the thoughts which whirl in the mind, but Bhagavan has indicated how we may disentangle ourselves from the web of illusion by the method of *Who am I?*. Confronted with this unflinching self-scrutiny, the mind or the bundle of thoughts which make up the mind, retreats. Relentlessly, with dauntless courage and perseverance the pilgrim must pursue this course until, as Bhagavan has so many times stated, it will be discovered that the spurious “I” or “ego” was all the time non-existent. When correctly applied Self-enquiry therefore reorientates the search for Truth with unerring accuracy, setting the pilgrim's feet firmly in the direction from whence he originally came.

This is so when understood from a relative viewpoint, for the Sage knows that both searcher and goal are mirages in the Eternal now.’

- (e) *Why did Maharshi show so much concern for animals?*

‘When the Blessed One walks among men, “ahimsa” or “reverence for life” is spontaneously carried out. Bhagavan by his example brought home to us the truth that LOVE embraces all and rejects none. The smallest insect carries within its delicate frame the gift of LIFE — and he who knows LIFE to be ONE cannot destroy, but rather, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “walks in love for love”, for: “True religion is to love, as God loves them, all things whether they be great or small.” (*Hitopadesa*).’

* * *

We read in the Bible that ‘The foolish man's heart is to the left; the wise man's to the right.’

Bhagavan explained to those who enquired that the organ of the spirit, in other words, the Centre of the spiritual life is the heart — that invisible Heart which many Catholics, for instance, are acquainted with as the Sacred Heart.

In all religions the true prayer-state is one where ‘heart and mind meet’ and joining hands, enter the mystical ‘Holy-Silence.’

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi embraced all weary hearts, drawing them gently onwards towards this ecstatic Haven of Bliss.

Those who are already acquainted with the Life and Teachings of Maharshi will not wonder that such a being walked in our midst.

But to some who still imagine themselves to be only the ‘body-mind’, I would quote the words of Maurice Maeterlinck:

‘The more one gives the matter thought, the more it appears impossible that we should be only what we appear to be; ourselves only,

complete in ourselves, isolated, separated, circumscribed by our physical body, our mind, our conscience, our birth and our death. We become truly possible and real only when we transcend all of these and prolong ourselves in space and times.'

Heaven does not turn a deaf ear to the groaning of deluded man. Instead Compassion wears human garb to refresh the travailing heart with divine healing, and we can only gaze with grateful, tear-wet eyes at just such a manifestation, that of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Although the Presence discarded the earthly shell some years ago, the radiant face is recorded in photographic form ; a gesture of loving mercy so that frail mortals may view

the Beloved and seeing, feel the impact of 'SOMETHING' so tender, so tolerant, so wise and so very beautiful in Its Infinite Understanding....

Just as St. John of the Cross that great poet-mystic fumbled for words, stammering like a child before the majesty of his inner experiences which he described as : 'I do not know what', so too are we rendered mute before the Indescribable when Grace as Bhagavan opens the Portals of the Holy Grove.

In the ETERNAL NOW Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi continues to offer this supreme gift to all thirsty pilgrims — that of HEART-ELOQUENCE which is born in the sacred Silence of the Divine.

Where is Ramana?

.....

It was in the early days of the Ashram. A visitor who had just arrived from a distant town went about from place to place eagerly enquiring, "Where is Ramana?" At last he heard that Bhagavan was in the kitchen and to the kitchen he hurried. Here four or five persons were found standing and the visitor could not make out which of them was the Sage. He singled out the simplest-looking person in the group — it happened to be Bhagavan himself — and asked him in a whisper, "Where is Ramana?" The person promptly pointed to a big cooking vessel and asserted with a smile, "There is Ramana!" As the others laughed and the visitor stared, Bhagavan explained, "The name RAMANA is carved on that vessel, not on this body."

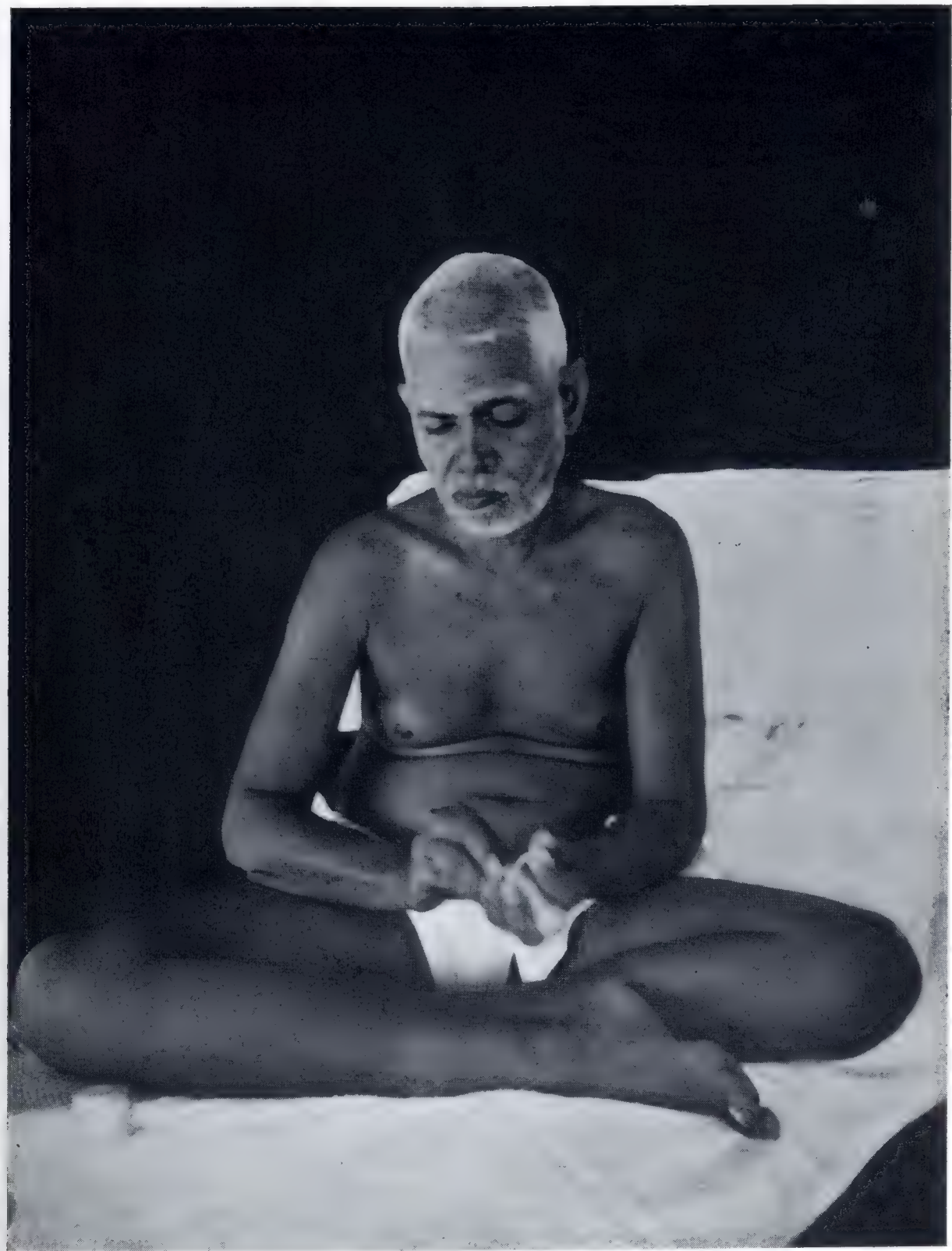
True Knowledge

.....

MURUGANAR

Besides the Self that is pure knowledge
Nothing else exists.
It is sheer folly to mistake
The world without for something real.
Truly immortal are those who live
A life of knowledge,
Knowledge the Self
Knowing knowledge the Self
In knowledge the Self.









Bhagavan's Universality

K. PADMANABHAN

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana was not a scholar of Vedic lore or Indian philosophy. But the authority of His spiritual teachings — with no propaganda efforts — has been universally accepted. What is the reason for this so wide and easy acceptance?

His teaching is identical with Advaita Vedanta, the non-duality of ultimate Reality based on reason and experience. His method is that of pure reason, to enquire, experience and realize, in practical life, the non-difference between the individual and universal consciousness. In trying to know non-duality in all the three states, Bhagavan insists that one has actually to be in non-duality, as there could be no distinction between knowing and being.

Sri Bhagavan teaches us by His practical experience, as in an experiment in a laboratory leading to the anticipated result. His sadhana or experiment results in His attainment of *sahaja samadhi*, — Absorption in the Self. Bhagavan's Self-experience in realizing non-duality, the ultimate Truth, and His way of living as the All in One's Self and One's Self in the All has opened the world's eyes and led to the acceptance of His teaching by all earnest seekers.

Sri Bhagavan, the Immaculate and the Irreproachable, shot beyond the shallowness, the conflicts and contradictions of mystic states and ecstasies. These, in the words of



Thompson, were “balked struggle, strained emotion and baffled enquiry”, and they kept religious experience outside the pale of science. Bhagavan's exposition of the sadhana for the highest realization is simple, direct, swift, reasonable and universal.

His *Forty Verses* is a compendium of the highest *advaita* and His *Upadesa Saram* is a brief and brilliant guide to the treasure buried within.

Philosophy in India is the Truth of Truth, the end of all knowledge, i.e., attainment of

that Knowledge knowing which makes all things known. It is a science founded in reason, absolutely practical and leading one to personal experience of Reality — to *Brahmanubhava*. Indian philosophy stresses that reason alone aids one in the realization of Absolute Truth, and it is reason, or true discriminative knowledge, again that assures you that ultimate Reality can be experienced and points the way to the experience.

Indian philosophy is concerned with the Supreme Truth, which is Pure Awareness. "Truth is such that often the learned miss it, while the unlearned find it, and that he who thinks that he knows it, knows it not, while he who thinks that he knows it not, knows it."

Bhagavan's teaching is to find out the Truth for oneself by wiping the ego out of the way.

The Truth should be free of all contradictions and all doubts. Whenever a contradiction in thought, or a dilemma in practical life, is encountered, Bhagavan teaches you to apply your reason and take to self-enquiry. As Robert Browning says, "You must begin your fight within yourself, to know that you are worth something."

Atma Vichara leads to the certitude that *atma tattva* is concrete, a fact, not a fiction or mere hypothesis.

He advises the simple way of *Dhyana Marga*, — the *Prapathi* or absolute surrender.

Bhagavan is an *Avatar*, who has thrown wide open to us all the doors of Indian philosophy with the silent power of Sri Dakshinamurthi and the dynamic energy of Lord Muruga. He is *Satyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*, all in One.

The Perfect Question

Wei Wu Wei

What Question ?

WHO AM I ?

Who is asking ?

I am.

Is not that also the PERFECT ANSWER

* * * * *

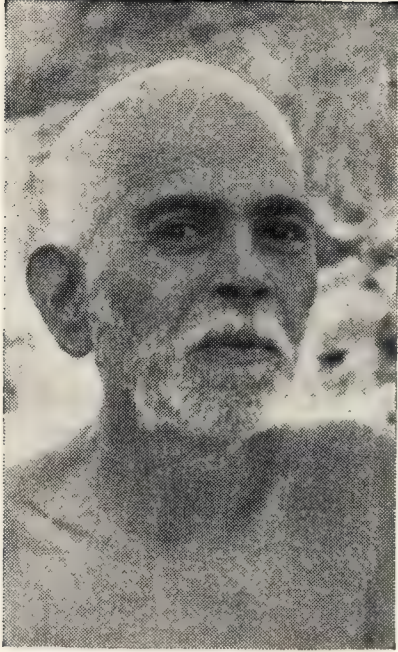
Every sentient-being, being sentient, perceives ;
Therefore

Every sentient-being may *apperceive*,
And so-doing is aware of what it is.

* * * * *

Whatever Sri Bhagavan said was almost certainly true,
And if he had said, or did say, exactly the opposite,
That would have been true also.

Why is this so ? It is so because what appears to be true relatively can never be true Absolutely, and what is true Absolutely appears relatively to be false because, relatively, it cannot be apprehended.



The Day I Surrendered

K. K. NAMBIAR

It was on a memorable day in 1936, three years after I came into contact with Sri Ramana Maharshi, that I mustered courage to write the following verse in Sanskrit on a slip of paper and place it at Sri Bhagavan's feet.

*"anyatha sharanam nasti
twameva sharanam mama
tasmāt karunyabhavena
raksha mam Ramaneshwara!"*

He took up the paper, read it and handed it back to me with a smile at the alteration I had made in the last line of the well-known verse to invoke his name. I went back and sat down some distance away from his feet. My eyes closed in meditation. When I opened my eyes again Sri Bhagavan was gazing intently at me and I was filled with an ineffable peace. I felt assured that my surrender was accepted.

Since then I put myself entirely into his hands and tried to do all my work in a spirit of self-surrender. There was hardly any planning for the future. Life flowed on smoothly. There occurred several episodes one after another to strengthen my faith in Sri Bhaga-

van's hand of guidance in all matters (some of them I described in my article "My Experiences of Maharshi" in the *Goden Jubilee Souvenir* Volume, published in 1947). The concluding paragraph of that article extracted below explains my real attitude to my life and work.

"I am not in the least bothered about the riddle of the universe: it doesn't matter to me whether the world is real or unreal. All that I cherish most is to live and act in Sri Bhagavan, and with his image indelibly imprinted on my heart, to perform the duties allotted to me in life, for I trust and believe that SAGE RAMANA IS REALLY GOD-INCARNATE."

It may need some explanation here to reconcile this attitude with Sri Bhagavan's teachings as generally understood. The direct path of self-enquiry taught by Sri Bhagavan requires one to put to oneself the question, *Who am I?*, because there is little use doing other things so long as one does not know oneself. And once the Real self is known there is nothing else to be done! Looks so simple, but is most difficult to accomplish. Philosophical treatises prescribe various

sadhanas and sannyasa for treading the path of self-realisation. Sri Bhagavan says that such sadhanas and the so-called renunciation signified by wearing of the ochre coloured clothes, is not sannyasa. According to him the non-identification of oneself with the body and mind is true sannyasa. Work is no hindrance so long as the idea "I do the work" is not there.

All these doctrines appeared enigmatic to me and I sought the assistance of other devotees and compared notes with them regarding the sadhanas to be done and particularly the method of meditation to be adopted. Yogi Ramiah, Paul Brunton, Major Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala), all had different things to say. Among them the suggestions given by Paul Brunton appealed to me and they work well even now. It was an amalgam of the two paths of self-enquiry and surrender. Sit in a comfortable posture — Padmasana in my case — take a few deep slow breaths to attain a certain amount of composure, concentrate on the image of Sri Bhagavan in the heart centre, and completely surrender yourself to him, and await further developments! Needless to say that the surrender leads you on to the path of enquiry and the distinction between the two paths vanishes.

Nowadays we hear so much about "deep transcendental meditation" and there are thousands who think that, it is something new and rushed forward to learn it. It is said to be a new technique of expanding the conscious mind by experiencing the thought in its infant state in the sub-conscious and eventually arriv-

ing at the transcendental state of Being. To those who have followed Sri Bhagavan's teachings this is just another version of the elementary step in the path of self-enquiry.

Whatever it be, this wave of transcendental meditation which seems to be spreading fast in western countries serves a very useful purpose in making them less and less materialistic while turning their mind inwards.

Why quibble about phrases like transcendental meditation and art of Being and hair-splitting distinctions in techniques? To one who has adopted the path of surrender there is no need to get entangled in such metaphysical acrobatics.

Once a gentleman came to Sri Bhagavan and complained that, though he had complete faith in God, God was not helping him to get over his troubles and that therefore he felt completely miserable and helpless. Sri Bhagavan asked him how he came to Tiruvannamalai. When he replied that he travelled by train he was again asked whether he carried his suitcase on his head while in the train. The answer was that he kept it on the floor of the compartment. Upon this Sri Bhagavan asked him to leave his burden, cares and anxieties, to be borne by the Almighty force that runs the universe, just as he left his luggage to be carried by the power of the engine that pulled the whole train.

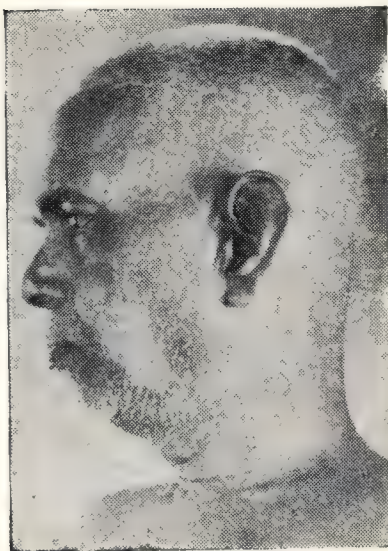
So let us not carry our burdens on our heads, but leave them aside and surrender ourselves to Sri Bhagavan, surrender completely without any mental reservation, and He will do the rest!

Who am I?

Experiences such as "I came, I went, I was, I did," come naturally to everyone. The Consciousness "I" is the Subject of the various acts. Enquiring into the true nature of that consciousness, and remaining as oneself, is the way to understand through Enquiry, one's true nature.

— SRI BHAGAVAN

To Whom the Problem Is?



.....
"ALONE

because it is beyond the trifold phenomena, as Experiencer, Experienced and Experience, or seer, seen and seeing, etc.

[The devotees of Sri Bhagavan are spread all over the world and as it is impossible to contact them individually, I am writing this 'piece' but, it is really in a personal way written, as if to each one.]

The sage says — suggests —
in all possible difficulties — problems —
personal, domestic, even political or religious —

to enquire :
namely : "to *whom* the problem is"

By this honest — serious — enquiry . . .
. . . we go deep inside to come to a stage or point which is really, (in the beginning), a conceptual Self — Self of mentation —

and not the *real* Self

The real Self — or simply say Self — cannot be 'reached' as such, 'experienced' in the sense we experience 'some thing';

The sage simply says "enquire"

And, here lies the crux of the whole issue.

Though we say, as we have read and heard a lot, that Self is the source . . . and many lofty things about Self, etc., but we have not actually found it, discovered it. So, naturally, because of our pre-conceived ideas we 'suppose' that it is Self we are coming upon.

But, it is certainly not that Self

(——— though later we go to that state.)

I will (try to) explain : [— though it is difficult.]

The sorrow, grief, our yearning for something, in short, our problem recedes so to say, by our "enquiry" to this conceptual self, (Self of our 'knowledge', 'information'), and when these 'two' become 'one' — when the problem merges into this self ———

[— when these two become 'one' and the

law is : a single entity cannot exist, it dies —]¹

And the Real, (call it 'Self'), comes into being or, rather, that 'ever-existent' comes to our "experiencing".

[This 'experiencing' is not based on the trifold phenomena, just referred to. Kindly note !]

This middle step — stage — or state — being not properly "understood" — many of us get stuck in the conceptual Self — and are confused, get no where² and indulge in 'atmosphere' so to say, created by chanting *mantras*, devotional songs, some religious practices, etc., etc., and perhaps, (though honestly), think themselves that they are on Maharshi's path.

[This is not at all written in an insensitive way . . . Please !]

Sri Bhagavan never wished us to really do such things He may not deny, perhaps some of their benefits so long as they do not lead us astray from the real path.

(It is all . . . lest we shall be "untidy" !)

Worthy devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi should see with an open mind.

Worthy devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi who are really sincere and want to tread on the path suggested by Him

and if I can offer my hand — to shake with — a friend's hand —

If it is not of any value — they should leave it off ; and, if they find it 'useful' it is just like dotting the 'i's and scratching the 't's.

It is a thing to be seen in oneself privately — individually —.

It is not a matter for discussion.

[As it is not possible it is appearing here.]

¹ The law of nature seems thus

Two (that is, dualistic)* things when put together, and thus, become 'one', that is, when they are united, that 'united thing' or 'one' evaporates, and the basic thing so to say, which holds them, or say, the Beyond of the World (that is, of dualistic things), — manifests itself — appears on the horizon — comes to our experiencing ! [It is a long sentence but please follow ! !]

* *Note on Note* : The existence of the world — or *Maya* — is based on dualistic machinery.

² Without controversy, kindly catch the spirit !

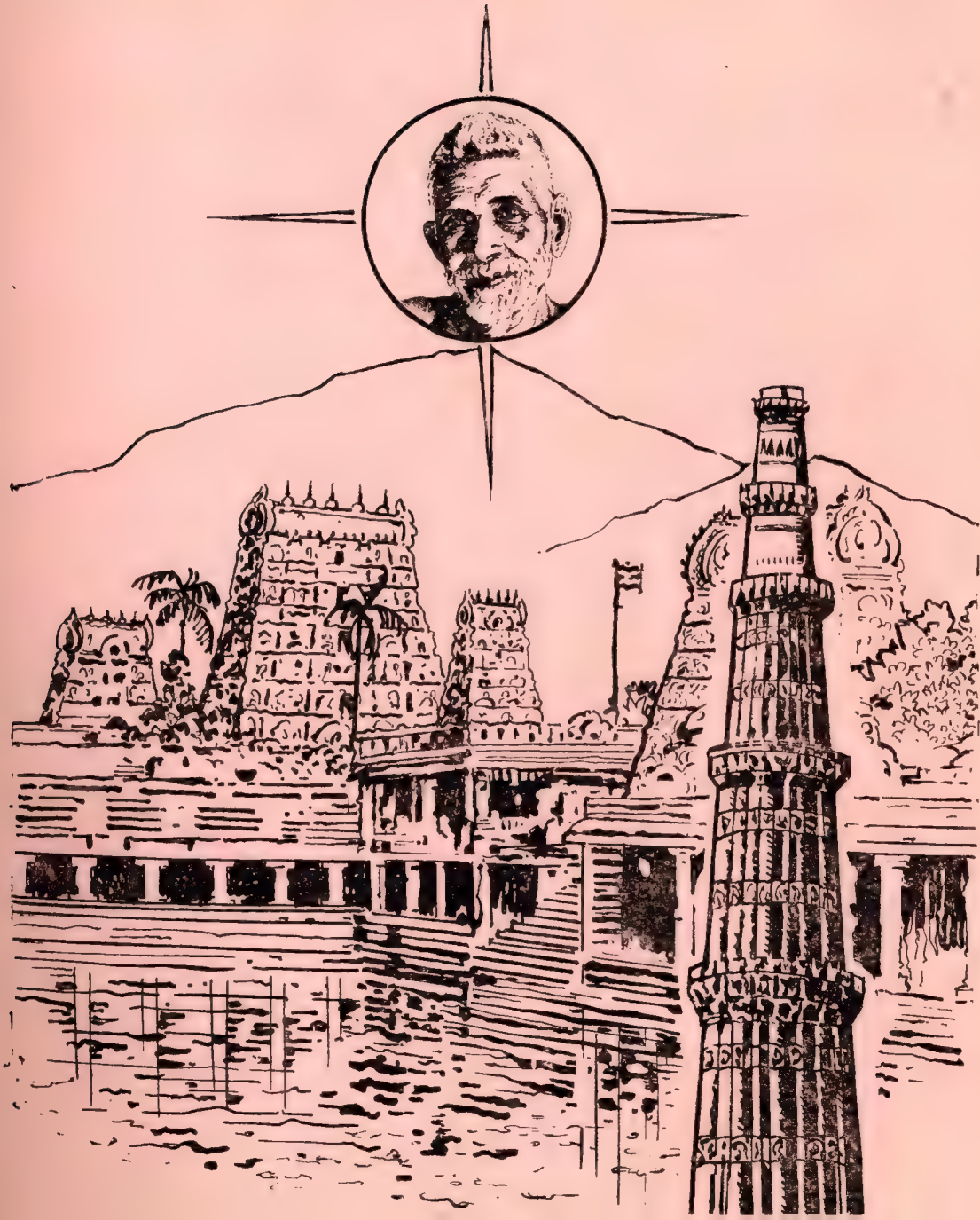
Our True Nature

Sri Bhagavan

"Forgetting the Self is Death. Remembering it is Life. You desire eternal life, Why? Because the present life in relativity is unbearable. Why is it so? Because it is not your nature. You are in truth the pure Spirit ; but you identify it with a Body which is a projection of the Mind, an objectified thought, and the Mind in its turn has originated from the pure Spirit.

Moreover, what is Life? It is Existence (as Consciousness) and that is yourself. That is the true life and it is eternal (beyond Time). Life in the Body is conditioned life. But you are life unconditioned. You will recover your true nature as unconditioned life, if the idea 'I-am-the-body' dies."

— from *Maha Yoga*.

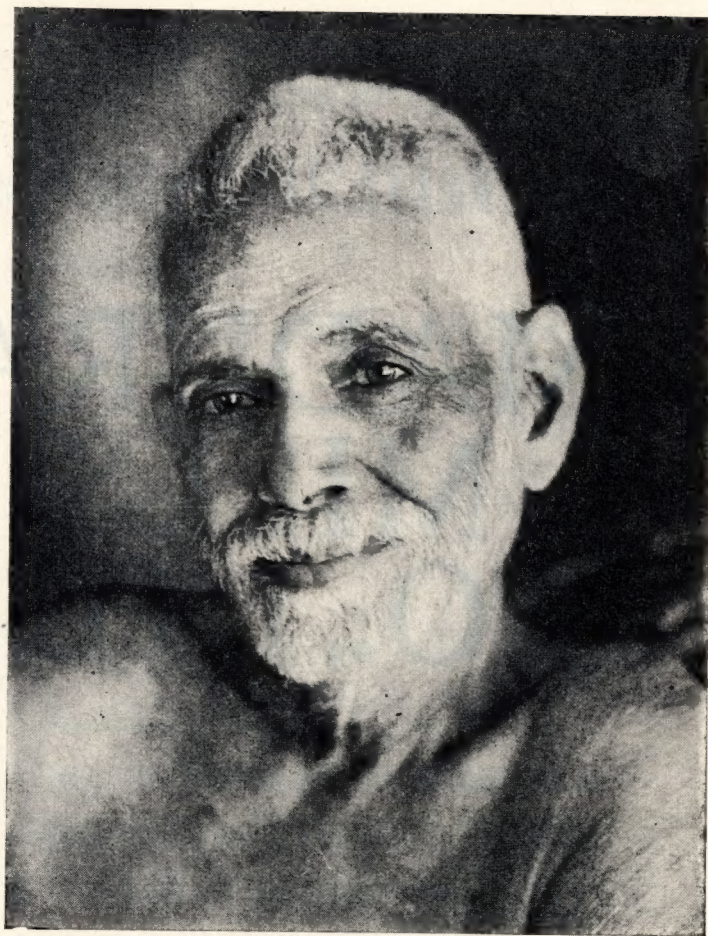


“Salutations to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the universal Master, the Dispeller of misery from the world, the One Who chases away the darkness of His devotees and displays Himself as the Eternal Consciousness inhering in the heart, blazing both within and without, bereft of the least trace of ignorance – the One who shines as the transcendental Truth underlying the world and beyond!”

Obeisance to the Lotus Feet

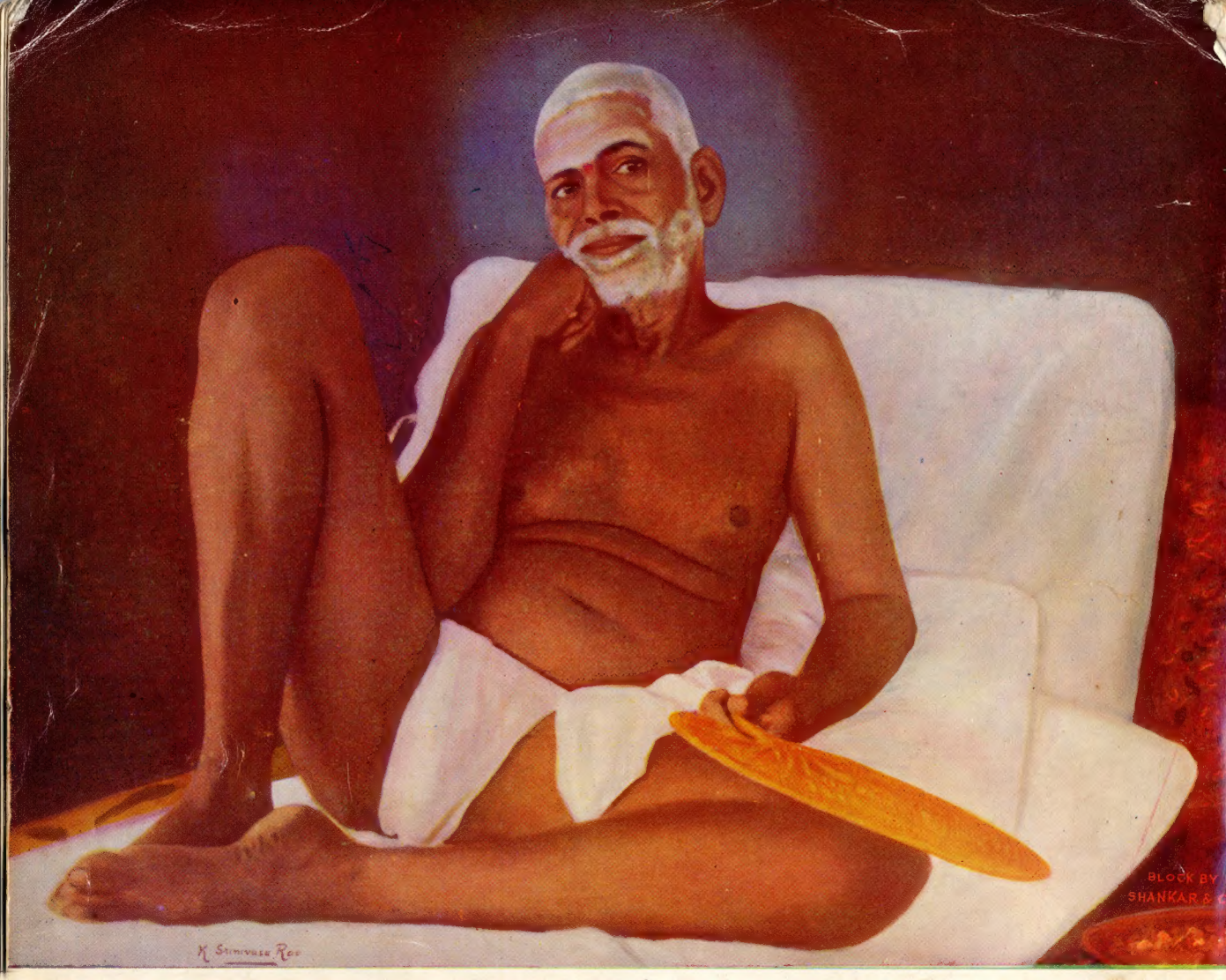
of

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





*Let us discover those truths that unite
all religions, rather than compare the
differences in faiths that men live by.*



K. Srinivas Rao

BLOCK BY
SHANKAR & C